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**THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY AND HIS  
PROBLEMS**



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# THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY

AND HIS PROBLEMS

BY

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## PREFACE

I can not remember a time since I have been grown when I did not know, intimately, boys of high school age and in high school, and when I did not like to sit down and talk to them. One group of boys, only a few years ago, I had almost daily contact with from the time they entered high school until they graduated from college. As a college executive, I meet, personally, every autumn, hundreds of boys fresh from the training of the high school, and revealing almost at once what they have gained and what they have missed. It is this intimate contact with so many thousands of high school boys that has induced me to write the papers contained in this little book.

*Morals and Manners* was read before a meeting of the North Central Academic Association; *Going to College* was given as a Commencement address to the boys of the University School, Cleveland, Ohio; the other papers have not previously been printed.

THOMAS ARKLE CLARK

URBANA, ILLINOIS,  
August, 1919.



## CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY.....	1
THE COURSE.....	21
STUDIES AND OTHER THINGS.....	40
EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES.....	56
THE LEISURE HOUR.....	76
BOOKS AND READING.....	96
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES.....	114
MORALS AND MANNERS.....	132
CHOOSING A PROFESSION.....	152
GOING TO COLLEGE.....	168



**THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY AND HIS  
PROBLEMS**



# THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY AND HIS PROBLEMS

## THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY

Bill and I were walking down town one September afternoon talking in a friendly way as we were accustomed to do. School was to open the next day, and Bill was to begin his high school course. He seemed more thoughtful than usual; something I could not make out was on his mind.

"What is it, Bill?" I asked finally. "What big scheme are you working out?"

"Won't tomorrow be a wonderful day!" he exclaimed. It was to him the beginning of a new existence.

The entrance of the boy into high school comes at the most critical period of his life. He is fourteen years of age usually, if he is a normal boy, and fourteen marks the dividing line between childhood and youth—childhood which passes all too soon, youth which opens up a thousand possibilities, which stirs a thousand new emotions, new impulses and new desires, which puts before him a thousand opportunities and a thousand new temptations for which he is often unprepared. It is a time of restlessness and change for the boy, perhaps which tends often to

make him give up school and to drive him upon the rocks. It is perhaps to be deplored that high school and adolescence should come at the same time.

It is for this reason that many thoughtful teachers have tried to change the situation by making it possible for children to complete the work of the grades by the time they are twelve, so that they may be well entered upon the work of the high school before the time of physical transition comes. Whether or not such reorganization of school work is feasible and whether or not it will ever be generally made, depends upon a good many things which it is hardly desirable to discuss here.

It is about the boy himself that I want most to speak and of the various problems which at the high school age he is called upon to solve. A lot of things are happening to him about the time he enters high school, very important things, too, and yet he is seldom prepared for these. He does not understand the situation at all himself, and those who know anything about it seldom help him out. His teachers are generally afraid to tell him what he ought to know about himself, or they are perhaps so taken up with presenting to him facts about history and economics and grammar and mathematics and the lives and accomplishments of other men, that they have no time to give to the boy himself. Even his Sunday school teacher who ought to get down to practical every day matters, generalizes on the facts and the phrases of the Bible and seldom if ever makes any personal or practical



application of its teachings to the boy's daily life. His mother has never been a boy, so she has no idea what revolutions are going on in his mind and body unless he tells her as he infrequently does, of the changes in view point which passing childhood and dawning youth bring, and his father—his father has long ago forgotten that he ever was a boy, so that he gives the son no concern.

The sensible, sympathetic father who takes his fourteen-year-old boy into his confidence and who talks to him frankly about the changes which are going through and within him is so rare as to be a negligible quantity in the discussion of the boy and his problems. Ninety-five per cent of the boys who enter college from high school will say, if asked, that their fathers have never so much as mentioned to them anything that had to do with sex or adolescence. What the boy learns at this time about his body and about the mysteries of life generally comes from boys as ignorant as himself, or more likely than not from some one who is not only ignorant but whose moral ideals are low and whose tendencies are vicious. It is the rowdy and the street loafer, and the nomadic hired man who has picked up his facts from the gutters, and the ignorant and the vulgar minded who solve our boys' sex problems for them—more's the pity!

A good many things are happening to a boy who is just entering high school, as I have said. Educationally he is forming an entirely new relationship. High school is differently run from the elementary school. He will have more

liberty and less restraint than he has been accustomed to, his teachers will treat him more as a man than he has ever before been treated. The subjects which he will take up are in themselves more interesting, they require more thought and less memory, more independence and more originality. He will need, if he is to get on, to apply his mind more seriously and for longer periods of time than has been necessary before. He will have, almost for the first time, opportunities for thought and reasoning. As he takes advantage of these opportunities and begins to think and plan and act for himself, he will gain the sort of strength that he will need later in life. The more responsibility he can take at this time the better for him. If he has a job or an obligation of some sort that requires regular daily attention it will be of tremendous advantage to him. It will strengthen his body and so reinforce his will. The more he is repressed, the longer some one else does his thinking for him and shoulders his responsibilities, the longer and the more assuredly he will remain a child.

But the most important things that are happening to him are physical and emotional. His body changes rapidly. His shoulders broaden, his arms and legs shoot out so fast that it is almost impossible to keep him inside his clothes. He grows up overnight, like a mushroom. His voice deepens, and he begins to realize for the first time perhaps that he is a boy and that he will soon be a man. It is his awkward age when no one understands him and when he least of all understands himself. He

is not so frank as he was. He keeps a great many things to himself, or if he tells them at all, he tells them to his boy friends only, because most of all he dislikes being laughed at or thought ignorant. A thousand things about his own being awaken his curiosity, and about these he is eager for information, but he seldom asks questions, because he would not for the world suggest the fact he does not know the things that he is the most eager to learn. He will even lie rather than admit ignorance of the questions which concern him most vitally. He is alert; he keeps his ears and his eyes open; but too often what he learns is in no sense enlightening or illuminating, and injures rather than helps him out of his quandary. Few people talk frankly and openly about the subjects which interest his developing mind. He wants very much to be a man all at once, and it is this desire very largely, no doubt, which causes him so easily to fall into the temptation of forming the bad rather than the good habits of men. I have never been able to understand why to a boy bad habits are likely to seem so much more manly than good ones.

In addition to the physical changes which are going on in his body there are within him emotional changes quite as great if not more so. He is subject at this time more than at any other time of his life to religious influences. If there is a religious revival in the community, he is among the first to show interest in it, and to "come forward." If he gets by this period of life without taking

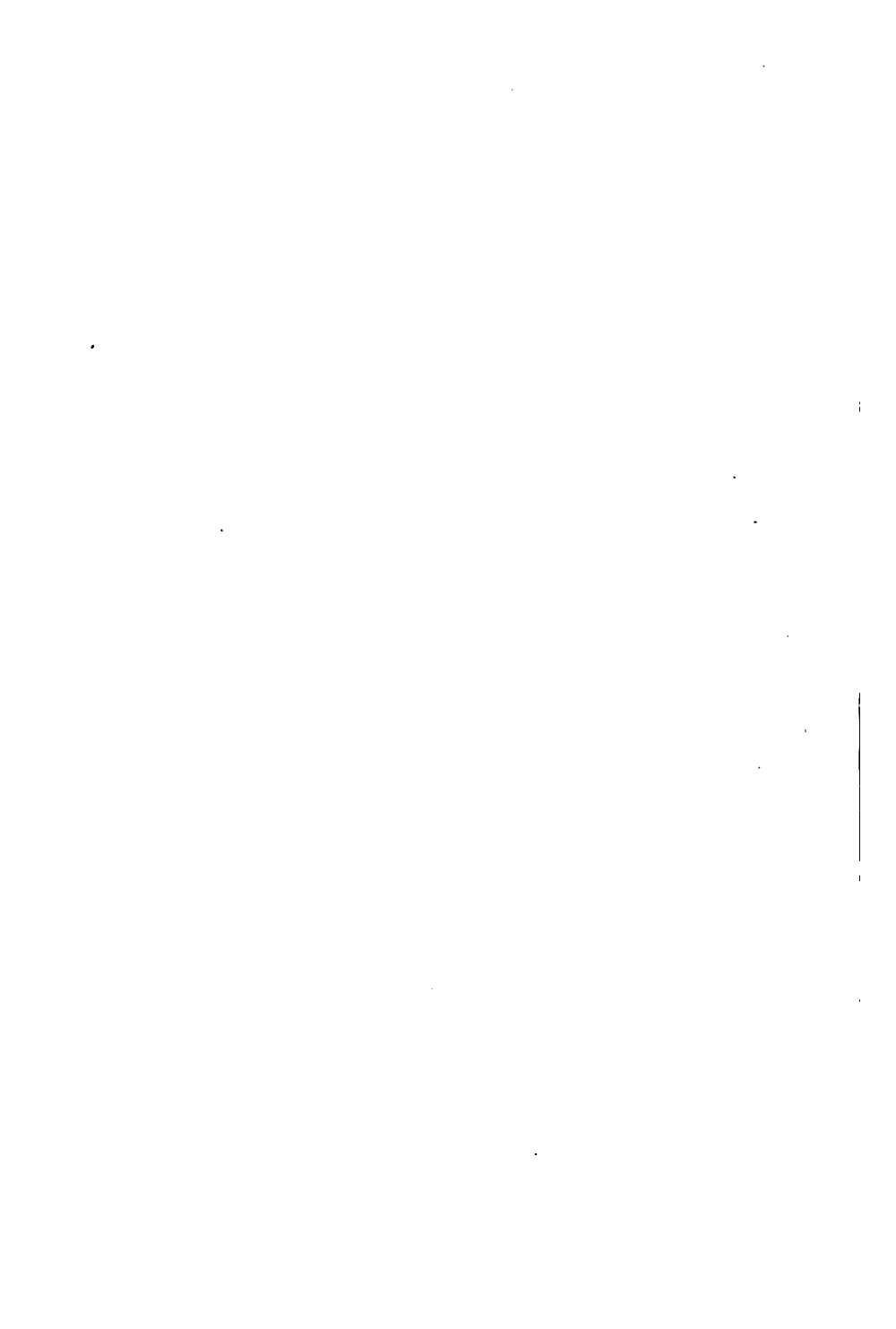
any definite stand in religious matters it will take a considerable amount of logic or persuasion later to stir him. This is his time of idealism, of the awakening in him of respect and reverence for God and that which is best in man. Those who teach him may not wisely forget this fact.

The is becoming a hero worshiper, too, and it is the physical hero who receives his devotion. Football stars and clever basketball players and prize fighters attract his attention. If the question of legalising prize fights were left to the vote of high school boys the affirmative vote would be overwhelming. If he reads the newspapers or all it is the sporting news for which he first asks; he soon knows who is high man in sporting circles, it is no long before he can call all the better known ones by their true names and he follows their performances like a religious devotee. He admires strength of heroism, physical power, and with all he must and for his imagination. It is unfortunate if he reaches a time when there is a physical weakness in his constitution, a lack of interest in sports and athletics. This is more a result of the influence moral or intellectual has on the body than it is of the man who is weak. A boy who is a good student will have the interference, as it were, of the intellect on the body, and it is here in the

converted me to the opposite theory. I was principal of a school with an enrollment of several hundred boys, a good many of them of high school age. They were rough, ill-trained, and notoriously hard to control and had driven out more than one timid teacher before my arrival. For two weeks I got on with them moderately well without laying a hand on any one. I was pleasant and firm; I took a good many of their pranks lightly, with the hope that if I did not notice their deviltries too much they would be discontinued.

I was quite mistaken, however. The boys misinterpreted my point of view entirely. They thought me soft-hearted, afraid to wield the willow switch, a weakling, in fact. It was only after I had soundly thrashed a half dozen or so of the leaders that they had any respect for me. They all adored physical strength, and those whom I castigated most vigorously were throughout my régime the most docile and they love me today.

If the boy develops a taste for reading at this point in his life, and it is well if he does, it is no sentimental stuff such as his sister dotes on, that pleases his taste. War and bloodshed and adventure hold him. Strategy and deep-laid plots and hairbreadth escapes are to his liking. Indians and burglars and highwaymen are his ideals. He courts danger and adores exhibitions of physical courage. He will probably break a bone or two in attempting to emulate the physical stunts which most please him. If he ever runs away from home it will be now, and most normal boys



**THE HIGH SCHOOL BOY AND HIS  
PROBLEMS**

morals; but to the boy himself who falls into such a habit there is often only the desire to be thought a man.

It was a somewhat puzzled teacher who talked to one of his pupils not long ago. The boy was only seventeen, he came of a very quiet, respectable and even religious family, and he had himself been in the habit of going to church and Sunday school quite regularly. No one had thought of accusing him of hypocrisy or inconsistency, and yet the night before he had been drunk. He could not himself quite explain how or why it had all happened. He had not planned the orgy deliberately, but he had been working hard, he had had little recreation, and he had grown tired of the situation, and, to use his own words, had "just cut loose." Now that it was all over and he had a little time to think, he found no special satisfaction in the memory of his escapade, and, stranger still to his teacher, he had no special regret excepting that his unwise combining of various forms of intoxicants had made him horribly sick and had left him with a coated tongue and a dull headache.

"I don't suppose I'll ever do it again," he said, "but I just had to have that experience once in my life."

He was learning slowly a fact that many boys and their teachers find it difficult to learn, and that is that the main problem of the high school boy whether in school or out is the problem of self-control—control of the body, control of the mind, control of the emotions.



The most important problem which the high school boy has is the discipline of his mind. It isn't easy to hold one's attention to a dull stupid book on mathematics or Latin when one would far rather be climbing a tree or playing at baseball, but it is often very necessary. A boy does not go to high school so much for the facts he learns in mathematics or Latin or chemistry as for the discipline he gets through learning these things. Of course every one needs information, and a boy may be excused if he thinks that the information he acquires at school is the main thing for which he spends his days and nights; but if he does think so, he is mistaken. The most important thing for any boy is to learn to think quickly and correctly, so to train his mind that it will do what he wants it to do within a definite time and at a definite time.

"I was in a hurry," you explain to your teacher or the boss when he calls your attention to the fact that the work you have accomplished is inaccurately or carelessly done, "and did not have time to do the job as well as I could have done had I had more time;" or "My mind was wandering, and I could not get down to business," you offer as an alibi for not having a piece of work accomplished when it was called for. But the well-trained boy or man will be the master and not the slave of his mind, and will have so done his work in high school or in college that his brain will submit to his direction and will plan the composition or solve the

mathematical problem, or get the right answer when these things need to be done. There is little time for inspiration when we are engaged in doing the regular work of the world. When there is a job to be done we can not wait until we "feel like it" before taking up the work. If he has developed these qualities of regular work and concentration of mind which it is possible for every high school boy to develop, he can do what has to be done whether he feels like it or not. Men could not wait until they were emotionally prepared when they were called into battle; they went to the front when the call came; they went "over the top" on the second. They had been trained to be ready at any time, and a boy's mind should be so trained.

Now an athlete soon learns that no matter how physically clever he may be, no matter how much natural strength of body or fleetness of limb he may possess, he will never really excel unless he practices regularly, unless he is constantly striving to do his best and to make each succeeding best a little better than was the former. It is often very difficult, however, for the high school boy or for his older and presumably wiser brother to recognize the fact that the training of his mind is not materially different from the training of his body. A clever, quick-witted boy can pick up a lot of information if he keeps his eyes and ears open; he can, in truth, with little or no concentrated study pick up quite enough to get by his high school examinations creditably or even

to be excused from them, if that is the custom of the school, on account of his cleverness, and still have disciplined his mind very little. Unless he studies regularly, unless he pushes himself often to do his intellectual best, he will train his mind as inadequately as the athlete trains his body when he practices irregularly and never does his best.

"I don't see why George failed in college," I heard a mother say not long ago. "He never studied in high school, and yet he managed to get fine grades."

She did not realize that she had herself given the explanation. The high school boy who is so clever that he never has to "crack" a book, as they say, who has never submitted even for a brief time to mental drudgery, who doesn't pretty frequently settle down and dig his level best, is going to have trouble later with his brain, for sometime when he will want it to work, it will rebel like a balky ill-trained horse. It will run away from him as he ran away from his duties at home. The high school boy in many cases knows little about concentration and less about hard, consistent study. That is why he fails sometimes when he goes to college, and quite as often as not it is the clever boy in high school who fails when he gets to college.

Regular study hours, the doing of difficult things well, the holding of oneself to accuracy and rapidity of thinking, concentration of attention upon a definite problem or piece of work for a reasonable time—these are some of the

methods which any boy may employ for training himself to think.

A boy's body ought to be trained as well as his mind. It is, of course, possible to find illustrations of men distinguished for their intellectual achievements who have had frail, ill-developed bodies, but this is the exception and not the rule. The muscles that are developed and trained early are more easily trained and more permanently as well, for the physical skill learned in youth is soon recovered in old age, even, if apparently forgotten.

I watched a man, nearly sixty years of age, not long ago play a tennis match with a young fellow. The older man had played little in thirty years, and he seemed rather slow and awkward at first. Gradually, however, his muscles responded to the impulse of his brain; his old tricks came back to him, he recovered his serve, he placed his balls with surprising accuracy. He was winded a little, perhaps, when the set was ended, but he had won against a very worthy opponent.

The high school boy growing as quickly as he does is awkward. He will remain in that condition unless he trains his body rigidly and regularly. He should learn to swim and to row a boat and to ride a horse; to run and climb and jump. He should develop skill in as many out-of-door games as possible such as golf and baseball and tennis. If he can learn to wrestle and box and dance so much the better. So far as he has control over his body he will find it easier to exercise control over his emotions.

The ability to stand on one's feet and speak is almost as much a matter of the body as of the mind. If a boy knows how to manage his feet and what to do with his hands and how to stand erect, he will find usually, that he has enough in his head out of which to make a pretty fair speech. Every boy in high school ought to practice sufficiently to be able to speak without having his hands shake or his knees tremble, and once he has learned, he is quite unlikely ever to forget.

I asked a very effective public speaker not long ago if his ability to speak well was natural or acquired.

"I was the shyest sort of boy," was his reply, "I stammered and hesitated and turned cold with fright whenever I got on my feet to speak. I determined, even while I was in high school, to learn to talk extemporaneously, and I forced myself to do so whenever I had a chance, and to speak as correctly and as much to the point as I could. Every boy can learn if he tries."

In addition to controlling his mind and his body, one of the most important things that a boy just entering upon youth should learn is the discipline and control of his desires and his emotions. All sorts of new emotions and desires and passions rush upon the fourteen-year-old boy, and in so far as he subdues and controls and directs these, he will become a strong man. It is his failure to do this that causes him to run away from home, or to learn to smoke and to swear and to develop habits of mind and of body that are unclean and immoral. It is as

often as not first from ignorance that he does these things, ignorance of the fact that it is he and not his environment that is changing. He often blames his parents or the conditions under which he lives for his discontent and unhappiness, while the truth is that all these new feelings and desires which are striving to get control of him are the result of sexual changes which are going on in his body, and which are causing him to look at life from an altogether different angle. A most important thing for him now and for the future is that he learn to control these desires and not that he let them control or subdue him.

All sorts of temptations will come to him at this time. If he can be made to understand that his body with all its parts is a sacred thing which his creator has given into his care to keep clean and strong and undefiled, if he can turn aside vulgar suggestions, if he will refrain from impure words and impure thoughts, and impure acts of all sorts, he will learn self-control of immeasurable value to him not only as a boy but as a man. For all these things sap a growing boy's strength, they reduce his vitality, they undermine his character, they make him less able to think and, worst of all, they make him far less a man.

Bad sexual habits in the developing boy are the greatest evil of which he can be guilty. They take away his initiative, they increase his self-consciousness, they rob him of his physical strength, and they weaken his mind. It

is only by living a clean, self-controlled sexual life that a boy can make the most of his physical and mental powers.

The boy of fourteen begins usually to take his first real interest in society when he enters high school. He is making his first real friends, and he is coming to realize for the first time the basis upon which friendship is formed. Here again self-control and discipline are necessary. A boy's friendships determine his character as much as any influence which operates in his life. Very few of us have formed alone the habits that possess us, but on the contrary we have done so in connection with one or more of our friends. When a high school boy cuts class or learns to smoke or stays out late at night or falls into any sort of irregularity, no one who has any sane knowledge of human nature ever supposes that he was alone when he did so. The fourteen-year-old forms into groups, he organizes little exclusive societies, he has his particular pals with whom he consorts and schemes and under whose influence he develops character and leadership.

In all these close relationships which grow up between boys of high school age there is invariably a leader. All make suggestions and present plans, but in every group of boys there is some one whose opinion is paramount, whose word and whose decision is law. Now at the outset any boy may determine, negatively at least, with whom he will associate; after relationships are strongly formed, however, it is not so easy, for it is always a much more

simple matter to evade or to decline an association than it is to break it after it has been made. Before he enters high school a boy's friends have not always been entirely of his own choosing. They have been determined by his parents, by his immediate neighbors, by the friendships which his father and mother had made for him and with him. To a certain extent, until he shall himself go away from home, this will continue to be true, but, far more than he has ever been at liberty to do so before, he will, when he enters high school, be left very much to his own devices in the choice of his friends. It is most important that he choose wisely, for upon his choice depend his habits, his ideals, his character. If his friends develop into a fast lot, and smoke and swear and waste their time, he will be more than likely to follow; if they are quiet and studious and clean minded, he is pretty sure to adopt the same conservative tactics. A boy, as well as a man, is known by the friends he keeps, and can with the greatest difficulty follow a line of conduct different from that which these same friends follow.

"I don't have to do what they do," a boy often says when warned against certain careless or evil companions, but the facts usually prove quite the contrary, and whether he wills it or not, he soon takes up the practices that his friends set for him.

It is a great opportunity which is offered a boy who goes to high school. In these days, however, when in most communities it is the rule rather than the exception



for boys to go, the privilege is not infrequently valued rather lightly. The boy goes, not from any serious purpose on his own part or any special desire for training, but because it is the custom, because his parents have desired it, and because all the other boys in his class are going. Possibly it is better to go for these reasons than not to go at all, but if added to these there is also the eagerness on his part to train his mind, to add to his store of information, to prepare himself better for the work which he must take up later in life, and especially if there is for him some interest, some line of study which he very much desires to carry on, his chances of getting somewhere will be materially increased. No one can get far in any line of work without interest. The work we do without joy in the doing is pretty sure to be badly done.

Intellectual work is not unlike physical. A group of laborers is engaged upon a piece of work near my office. I can look out of my window and see them as they gather in the morning. Some of them come early and sit on the curb and smoke or talk to each other; others come up at the last minute. When the whistle sounds announcing the hour to begin, few of them go to their work with any enthusiasm or apparent pleasure. They drag themselves to their feet with reluctance, they take up their tasks with indifference, and when the twelve o'clock whistle announces quitting time, they throw down their tools with a rapidity that is disheartening. It is hardly necessary to say that they accomplish little, their progress

in their trade is slow. They are discontented, dissatisfied, inefficient and unhappy.

If a boy is going to high school, he should go with a spirit different from this. He is having a rare chance to develop his mind, to strengthen his character, to widen his chances of usefulness and success. This chance should inspire him to do his best, to meet and to solve his problems with courage and manliness.

## THE COURSE

When your grandfather went to high school, if fortunately he had the chance to do so, the course of study open to him was a pretty rigid one, very much indeed like an intellectual table d'hôte at which he had little opportunity to pick and choose, but must take what was set before him and ask no questions. There was a generous helping of mathematics with Latin and probably, Greek, to form the heavy part of the intellectual meal. Physics and chemistry often made up a part of the requirement, with history and English to serve as dessert to lighten the repast. There were few if any electives then, and little questioning on the part of the students as to whether or not what they were taking was likely to "do them any good" or was particularly to their individual tastes; they took their studies as they ate the simple nourishing food that was set before them at home by grandmother, in the belief that their elders knew best what was good for them.

Now everything is different. The program of study in the well-equipped modern high school carries an intellectual bill of fare as varied and as bizarre as that represented by the à la carte dining service of a first-class hotel. The boy entering high school today has so varied a program set before him, has so many things from which to choose,

that it is little wonder if he is not sometimes confused and at loss to know just what to choose. Unrestricted election is not possible in any high school, so far as I know, but the restrictions are so limited that the actual results amount almost to that. High school boys have so great a variety put before them that they often become over fastidious and finical in their tastes and so hard to please that they refuse to show interest in, or to cultivate an appetite for, anything. A dozen different subjects of which his grandfather would scarcely have known the names, from agronomy to pharmacy, are now found in many a high school boy's program.

Even if the boy is sensible enough to recognize the difficulty and the danger he is in, he will not always find it easy to get intelligent advice. There is a wide difference of opinion these days as to just what is best for a boy to study. There are those who think he ought to choose only what interests him, only what may be put to immediate and practical use. There is no greater educational fallacy than this insistence that we should always make a student's work interesting, and that if he can see no practical end in what he is studying, there is no logical reason why he should go on with it. He should study, the argument is, only such subjects as he finds he has special fitness and liking for. The lines of least resistance are the lines for him to follow. "Make it easy or cut it out."

A young fellow will not always get a great deal of help

by going to his father or his mother. They may not have had a high school experience themselves, and even if they have had, things are done very differently now from what they were twenty-five years ago, and educational affairs are managed in quite another way than when your father was young. Anyway fathers are often thought old-fashioned and tremendously behind the times by their young sons, and it is not always easy for boys to take the father's advice even if the fathers are willing to give it. Fathers, too, fall into the same educational jargon that they hear about them without always thinking seriously on the problems of education as they are presented to young boys.

Teachers, it is true, ought to be able to give dependable advice, because it is their business to know something definite about educational matters, but too many teachers are specialists, or think they are, and are too much impressed with the importance of the subject which they themselves teach to be able to give unprejudiced advice. It is a rare teacher who when asked will advise a boy against taking a subject which he himself teaches. As a result, in most cases, the boy is left to make his own decision and within the limits of his possible elections, to rely upon his own judgment as to what he shall study.

In making this choice he is pretty likely to be influenced by popular opinion, by what some of the other fellows are taking, and by his own personal tastes and tendencies. Few people would work if circumstances did not require it, and fewer still would voluntarily choose to do disa-

greeable or unpleasant things, and a young boy least of all is likely to do so. Very naturally, then, if allowed to determine his own program, he picks out what he likes best, not stopping to inquire whether or not what gives him the most pleasure is likely to do him the most good.

"Why did you drop chemistry?" I asked a neighbor boy in high school not long ago.

"I didn't care for it," was his reply, "and I don't see any reason in studying anything I don't care for, do you?"

I really did, and I tried to tell him that every one has all through life, every day usually, to do many things that are not pleasing, and that the sooner one begins, the easier the task becomes.

He shies, often at what he considers difficult. If he reasons badly, he avoids, as far as possible, mathematics and chemistry and physics. If he has a poor verbal memory he passes up Latin and modern languages arguing when questioned on the subject, that he can get just as much good out of something else that he finds more to his liking. If he finds spelling difficult or the composition of themes puzzling he dodges such work as well as he can and explains his course of action by saying that he "never could spell or write a good theme, anyway." He fails in doing so to recognize the fact that one of the main purposes of education is to help him to do more easily these and other things which he may find hard to do. A

normal mind can be made to work successfully along almost any line, if the boy to whom it belongs will apply himself persistently to the difficult subject. There is nothing so sure in any sort of endeavor to bring defeat as the admission at the outset that defeat is very probable, and there is no intellectual joy so sweet as the successful accomplishment of a task that was thought difficult or impossible. The boy who says he is going to fail seldom does anything else.

Just the other day a boy was telling me, with the greatest exultation showing in his face, of his experience with what the teacher had called "the hardest problem in the book." The boy did not find mathematics easy, often he was satisfied with working the simpler problems at the beginning of the assignment trusting to luck that he would not be called upon to explain any of the "stickers" when it came to the recitation. This time, however, his ambition was stirred, his "spunk was up," he said, and he determined he would work that problem if it took all night. Well, it did take mighty nearly all night, but he stuck to it, and got it right, and the joy of mental conquest was a satisfaction and an inspiration to him for the rest of his high school course. So is it to every boy who struggles. The benefits of such accomplishments, too, will not end with a boy's graduation from high school. Forty years afterwards he will still be able to feel the self-reliance which he gained through his boyish conquest of difficulty; forty years afterwards he will be stronger to

meet unexpected trials by having overcome this mental hardship.

"What are you going to take next half year?" I asked Donald at mid-year.

"I don't know," he replied. "Do you know any snap course?"

The snap, whatever it is, will get a boy nowhere excepting to give him credits, and what one ought to want out of four years of high school is training that will make one happier and more able to think and that will fit one better to do the hard but necessary things of life.

Next to the interesting and the easy, the practical is what now appeals to the majority of boys. There is no sort of bunkum in educational matters that appeals now so strongly to the public as that which is presented with the label "practical" on it. It is like the old "made in Germany" which used so to appeal to us when we found it on an article in which we were interested, and it is about as cheap and worthless in its significance. Our high school courses are crammed full of subjects which are supposed to be eminently practical and which will assist those who have taken them almost immediately to make money or to get a job or to do something. Typewriting, stenography, cooking, dressmaking, millinery, plumbing, typesetting, manual training, pharmacy, business English and business arithmetic, whatever these last two subjects may be, may all be found in one or another



of our high school curricula, and they appeal very strongly, some of them, to boys, because they suggest an immediate use and application of knowledge.

I am not now meaning to imply that many of them are not of use; in fact very likely each is of some benefit and may be put to immediate use more readily, apparently at least, than a good many other subjects which are in the high school course. They are more easily learned, however; they require less brain power, and they are more quickly forgotten than are those subjects that require concentration of mind and logical reasoning.

"Of what possible use could Latin be to me?" George protested the other day when his father was advising him to include it in his high school course. "I'm not going to teach, I'm not going to be a lawyer, and nobody talks Latin these days."

There is a curious, though possibly an explainable, point of view with many young people now-a-days that only the teacher or the lawyer could ever find any use for so dead a language as Latin—the teacher because everybody expects him to have had the subject, and the lawyer because many legal terms are still expressed in Latin, and the lawyer is supposed to know how to translate them. I suppose the real facts are that neither of these men needs Latin in his business more than any other intelligent or educated person does.

I am no special advocate of foreign languages, and especially of dead languages, and have no special fluency

either in reading or speaking any one. I have had some training in three languages besides my native tongue, but if I am in any degree able to estimate the relative benefits to me of the various subjects which I pursued preparatory to entering college I have no hesitancy in saying that my study of Latin meant more to me than anything else I did and means more to me today. History bored me, so I worked very little at it; mathematics required little study on my part, so though I received high grades in it I really derived little discipline from it, science I liked, but it did not require any strenuous effort to get by the examinations. Latin was to me the most difficult of all. I toiled at it; I dug out laboriously each word and phrase and sentence; I committed my declensions and my paradigms with painful slowness, but I held myself to the task, and I accomplished it with rather more than average success.

I can read today, after thirty years, with some fluency every Latin text I ever studied. I got more idea of concentration and accuracy and coördination out of the subject than from anything else. It was the one thing that gave me mental discipline; it was the thing that required of me most serious study. Perhaps it might not accomplish the same result for others; perhaps for you that result would be brought about through some other means; but for me, it was the Latin that did it, so when I hear a boy say, "What possible good could Latin do me?" I tell him my story, and I try to show him

that it will do for him what it did for me if he will go at it with a determination to do it well.

I once heard a practical man, one of the leading engineers of the country in fact, and a man trained at a well-known technical school in New England, make the statement that if he were given the privilege of going to school or college again he would never elect anything that was considered practical. What he really meant, he explained, was that as he saw education it is not for immediate and practical use so much as for training and discipline of the mind, for the development of ideals, for the setting of standards. High school is not so much to give a boy specific information as it is so to prepare him to get that information for himself if he ever needs it, and needing it that he may have a brain sufficiently well trained intelligently to use the information when he gets it.

Of course it would be quite unwise and even untrue to assert that the practical things one finds in a high school course do not in a measure conduce to discipline and training of the mind. Many of them are both practical and disciplinary, but as a rule the so-called practical subjects that are more and more creeping into the high school course and that make the strongest appeal to the boy and quite as often to his parents, have little disciplinary value, have less cultural value, and are seldom used practically after the boy leaves high school. The boy who is fed-up on these subjects often has a hard

time when he is called upon to work out problems which require logical and consistent thinking.

Sometimes, too, a boy is tempted to "specialize" in electing his course in high school. He makes up his mind to prepare for a definite line of work, and he begins early to load up his course with all that is offered in a single department of work. This is usually an unwise thing to do. It gives a one-sided training, it develops a rather badly balanced mind. The boy who runs to languages, or to commercial subjects, or to drawing and manual training because he likes these subjects, or because he thinks they will better prepare him for a specific sort of work, even though he is allowed to graduate from high school on such a specialized program, has missed the vital purpose of a high school course. After he has been taught to think, after he has laid a broad foundation, a boy can specialize to much better advantage in anything he likes.

So far I have seemed to be satisfied with condemning certain practices followed in choosing a course in high school, without giving much suggestion as to what is best to do. It is a foolish man, however, who spends his energies entirely in condemning and tearing down and who does not suggest something definite and constructive.

There is a certain necessary preparation which every boy should get in high school if he intends to go to college or if he is looking forward to a specific sort of work. The college entrance requirements are now about as flexible as they are likely to be made for a while, and they are

about as liberal as any high school course ought to be, and yet, if one is to enter college, there are a few things which are essential in all cases, and in technical colleges there are additional requirements. For instance one can not enter any course in engineering without having a fairly thorough foundation in mathematics and physics. At least a year and a half of algebra are required with a year of plane geometry and a half year of solid geometry. Some institutions require in addition advanced algebra and trigonometry. Every high school principal is acquainted with this fact and ought to make it evident to his students, though he does not always do so. If the boy has the foresight to inquire he will undoubtedly get the information he desires, but every year I find fellows who wish to enter a course in college for which they do not have the requirements, and these requirements, had they known them, they might very easily have met.

The man who expects later in college to go on with English or chemistry or foreign language should at least find out the minimum requirements in these subjects, for entrance to college, and should meet them, so that he may not later be handicapped on account of not having done the thing which he could easily have accomplished.

There are a great many people who maintain that there is a vast difference between preparing for college and preparing for life. These people hold that because one does not expect to enter college after he is through with high school, he is therefore excusable if he omits from

his course such subjects as do not appeal to him either as interesting or as practical. There is in their arguments the inference that college entrance requirements are unreasonable or freakish, or that they do not furnish a young fellow with the training that will be of any material value, or at least of the greatest value to him, should he not go to college. I believe that quite the contrary is true, and that the course prescribed for entrance to college is on the whole as good a course as a boy can select no matter what he intends doing. Such a course will teach him logical thinking, and the ability to think is quite as necessary out of college as in it; whatever one undertakes and carries through that causes him to think is of the greatest advantage to him in any later enterprise. Since no boy is likely while he is in high school absolutely to know that he will or will not go to college, the safest plan would seem to be so to choose his course in high school that he may meet the college entrance requirements should he ever want to do so.

Every boy should undertake something in high school that he finds hard to do, something that will make him bring his books home at night and do a little studying after school hours. There is always a question about the training the boy is getting who never has to do any studying at home, who never finds anything that causes him to dig, who does not know what it means to work his brain at times as hard as it is capable of working. If you will ask any man, young or old, out of what experience, mental

or physical, he has received the most valuable training he will almost invariably answer that it was from the experience which forced him to work the hardest. It is through vigorous and regular exercise that any muscle or any faculty is developed.

I knew "Mike" Mason before he entered high school; and "Mike" developed later into the best two-miler the Western Conference has ever had. He had no special talents athletically at the outset, unless one should admit that persistence and willingness to work hard and to sacrifice whenever it is necessary are special talents. Mike wanted to be a good runner, and he was willing to pay the price. He trained regularly all through his high school course; he worked hard when other boys, some of them as good prospects as he, perhaps, had long ago given up the contest and had gone over to join the rooters on the bleachers; he worked hard when hard work was far from pleasant; he gave up everything that seemed to interfere with his prospects, but when he was ready for college he was beginning to be counted as one of the coming athletes of the state, and before he graduated he was known as the best runner of the middle west. And it was largely through hard work, through doing his best, through his willingness constantly to tackle something hard that Mike trained his muscles and developed his mind, and outstripped his competitors in the race.

Mr. Frank A. Vanderlip, of New York, in a recent address to young people said, "If you are starting out

to make a success in life, don't choose the job that offers you the easiest time or the most money. Choose rather the one that requires the hardest work and furnishes the greatest opportunity for your development." Now a boy trains his mind as he learns a profession or trains his muscles, by putting it to the test and seeing what it can regularly do when it is pushed. It is for this reason that I should advise a boy, no matter what his regular curriculum in the high school may be, always to select some course that will give his mind a good work out.

I heard an architect say once that to be worth much in his profession an architect had to be able to do his work rapidly and to do it well. There are a great many people, he alleged, who can turn out a lot of work in a short time, but it proves inaccurate or worthless; there are a great many others whose work is beautifully and carefully done, but it takes them all summer to get anything accomplished. Neither sort of person will get far in his profession. Out of his high school course every boy should learn concentration—that is the ability to center the mind on a definite piece of work and to bring it to completion within a definite and reasonable time. Some boys learn this trick more easily than others, but it is quite possible for every boy so to acquire control of his mind that it will accomplish what he wants it to do within the time at his disposal. Possibly the best way to bring this about is through setting for himself mental "stunts" and trying to see in how short a time these may be satis-



factorily accomplished, just as when we were boys we used to set for ourselves physical tasks.

"If you will get the potatoes hoed by three o'clock," mother used to say to us boys, "you can go fishing for the rest of the afternoon."

How quickly conversation and youthful horseplay stopped; the weeds fell before our devastating hoes like the Huns before the marines. We plied our task with a vigor and a persistency that brought it to a glorious finish with time to spare before three o'clock.

It is so that a boy ought to learn to drive his mind, yet few young fellows come to college or go out from high school into life with much idea of mental concentration or much training in it. Their minds have a tendency to jump from one thing to another with the skill of an acrobat. They find it difficult to concentrate their attention on a single subject for fifteen minutes, and, both in high school and college, they are handicapped by this lack of mental control.

The best student I have ever known was so not so much from superior quality or alertness of mind as from his unusual ability to concentrate and hold his attention on what he was doing. He could get more done in an hour than most fellows could accomplish in two. When he settled to his books nothing moved him or diverted his attention. He would sit for an hour never stirring a muscle excepting as he had to turn the pages of the book he was reading. When he was at work he neither spoke

to his companions nor seemed to take any account of what they are doing or saying. This is a quality of mind which every boy would do well to cultivate, and it is a quality which can be developed through effort and practice.

A boy should get a certain breadth of view from his high school course. It should take him to other countries than his own and to other worlds. It should interest him in the great people and the great movements of thought of the world, and should stimulate in him a desire to read and to know more and to see more of what the world contains. It should be for him the beginning and not the end of an interest in history and science, and literature; in inventions and discoveries, and manufactures. If it is to do this, the boy must have shown interest in more than one subject in the high school; he must have done more than merely pass in the various subjects which he has elected; he must be taken out of his own narrow environment, his interest and his breadth of view must be broadened, and he must see life as a different and a better thing than it was before he took up a high school course.

A boy should get from his high school course better taste, better manners, more interest in poetry and music and art and whatever is idealistic and beautiful. He should be less selfish than when he began his course of study, more interested in other people, more ambitious.

Besides choosing subjects that will require hard work, that will develop concentration, broaden his view and

develop his taste and his ideals, every boy should regularly have something in his course of study that he likes. Doing what one likes may not always be so profitable but it is more interesting than doing the difficult. Life, and especially high school life, should not be all drudgery or it will fail of its main purpose. Every day's work should be looked forward to with interest and pleasure, and this can be only when the program of studies is in some part at least pleasing to the boy. We have all eaten the carrots or the common bread and butter we had no taste for in order that we might the sooner get at the dessert which we so much more enjoyed, and we shall often find the same condition existing in the boy's attitude toward his high school course. He will stand a certain amount of unpleasant work provided there is mixed up with it something he enjoys.

The question of carrying an over-schedule often comes up. Some boys say that they always do their best work when they are carrying the heaviest intellectual load. This means that only when they are under pressure, when they are being urged on by surrounding conditions do they develop concentration and conservation of their time. It is undoubtedly true that for some temperaments this sort of goading is most conducive to good work. The less some boys have to do, the less they will do, and vice versa. Simons was one of that sort. When he carried a light schedule he loafed and cut class and fooled away his time generally. It was only when his teacher told

him that he had no shadow of a chance to pass that he got down to business. When he was metaphorically pushed against the wall with some one at his throat, he roused himself and fought for his life, and he usually won the contest. He was like a man who really never makes an effort to swim until he thinks himself drowning.

Under ordinary circumstances a normal schedule is best. There is little to be gained from finishing high school ahead of one's class. It is pretty hard if not practically impossible to develop in a boy of sixteen the judgment and the power of thinking that we expect him to have at eighteen. The time element counts more than we are often willing to admit, and the high school course finished in three years is quite often worth no more than seventy-five per cent of the same course pursued normally and completed in four years. If a boy has been unlucky, if he is behind his class, then it is sometimes an advantage for him to speed up by carrying more than the normal amount. In most cases, however, it is a mistake for him to do so. A normal schedule gives a boy time to think, time to read, time to do his work well. It is always better to do a moderate amount of work with credit than to skim indifferently through twice as much. The boy who just gets by misses the most of the good that he might get out of his course.

The high school course for a very large number of boys is the end of their formal educational training; they go no further excepting as they acquire training from the

practical experiences of business or industrial life. A boy should carry away from high school then, something more than a diploma inscribed with a list of the subjects he has pursued. He should have grounded himself in the elements of a number of subjects, he should have learned at least the beginnings of logical thinking and be ready to solve whatever problem is put to him, he should have some knowledge of literature, he should know how to write a correct sentence, and he should not count either reading or writing a task but rather a pleasure. His high school course should have prepared him for entrance to college, or, if that privilege is denied him, it should have given him a helpful and satisfactory training for entering upon the practical duties of life.

## STUDIES AND OTHER THINGS

Kenneth, my next door neighbor, who is a senior in high school, has a habit of dropping in on me every few days to talk things over. He is a healthy normal young fellow of seventeen who generally gets on well with his teachers; whose work is being creditably done if his final grades are any indication of success, and who has as little fault to find with the world as the average boy of his age who has no responsibilities and who has never made sacrifices.

We discuss all sorts of topics, from the probable future of the Bolsheviki to the latest bill at the Orpheum, but I am rather interested to notice that unless I drag in the topic myself he seldom has anything to say of his studies. Physics, Vergil, Shakspeare, and history engage his thoughts, or are supposed to do so, five days in the week, but he seldom of his own volition makes these the topic of conversation, unless it be to rail against one or the other of them. He talks freely of the football team, of his own accomplishments and possibilities as a member of it, and of the determination of the eleven to clean up Springfield and win a championship. He is interested slightly in the fortunes of the high school debating team, although debate to him is about as manly a sport as knitting for the soldiers. He dilates at length on the success of

the last high school dance, and when I ask him sympathetically about Clara, I know that I have opened up a topic that can not be anything like adequately discussed at one sitting. The incidental things connected with his high school life seem to him the most interesting and the most vital. He gives considerable time and thought to the "other things" but, outside of class at least, none to his studies.

I am convinced that he is not unique in this respect. Although I have no boys of my own, I have frequently had them in my household. I have for some time, also, acted as guardian to two young fellows who are in a western academy of standing, and from them I receive weekly letters, usually written with the ostensible purpose of giving me information with regard to the intellectual, and physical progress of the writers, but actually to offer an opportunity to ask that their regular allowances be increased or at least not delayed in transit. In these letters I get no discussion of studies, and seldom any reference to them. Were it not for the friendly communications of the principal, and the regular bills for school supplies which I receive, I should have no knowledge, even, of what subjects, the boys are pursuing. Their letters are made up chiefly of optimistic predictions as to their athletic successes, of accounts of escapades (harmless of course, and quite within the regulations of the school), of dramatics, and of anticipated pleasures at social functions with the Ferry Hall girls. Even the attaining of a high

grade, which is a rare enough occurrence, may not be mentioned at all. At Christmas or Easter time when they visit me, I find that the dullest topic of conversation which I can introduce is studies.

I am not suggesting that this is out of the normal; it is, perhaps, quite in accord with the principle that the thing which touches us most deeply and which is closest to our hearts we are sometimes least likely to speak about. Possibly the high school boy considers it "shop" and thinks that he gets enough of it in the regular daily routine, and had best forget it when away from it. Possibly there is a certain feeling that one who talks about his studies is likely to be thought a grind, and however creditable it may be to work like a Trojan at football or track or baseball or in getting ready for a class dance, it has not yet become so generally popular through regular persistent effort to excel at one's studies. Why, I have never known. If one excels in his studies, it is in the minds of most boys creditable only if one does so without hard work, and it is not a thing to boast about like breaking the school record in the quarter mile.

Notwithstanding all this, however, a boy's studies constitute his business during the four years he is in high school. They are the main thing. They ought to have his best effort and his best thought. Father thinks so; most of the neighbors feel that way; his teachers have no doubt of it. No matter how good an appearance you make at the Junior dance, no matter how widely advertised you



are as a pole vaulter or how enchantingly you warble on the Glee Club, if you do not carry your work creditably at the end of the semester, you are a failure so far as high school is concerned. It isn't enough that you make the debating team or are elected class president or are known as the most popular boy in school; it's the studies that count.

Too many boys go to high school without much definite purpose. They expect to go to college, and high school is part of the necessary routine for the accomplishment of that result. All the other fellows are going, and it is easier to go than not to do so. They would rather continue going to school, as one boy told me, than go to work; and so it goes. If they were asked what their reasons are—if any boy who is reading this essay were to ask himself—the answer would in all probability be that they “wanted an education,” whatever that may mean. I am not sure that with all the experience I have had and with all the definitions I have read, I could myself give an adequate explanation of what education really means, but I am sure that it means in some degree training of the mind, and that such training comes through application and regular rigid exercise of the brain, through the accomplishing of mental tasks that are not easy and not always pleasant. Every young boy knows that if he expects to amount to anything as an athlete he must train regularly and persistently, that he must deny himself many things which he would otherwise enjoy, and that he must not only constantly do his best, but that he must be striving all the

time to make his best better. It is with some such spirit as this that a boy should go at his studies. He will never do very well unless he learns concentrated hard work. He will never increase his ability to think as he should unless he tries to do well a good many things he doesn't like to do.

If possible, have an object in view. Set some intellectual goal for yourself, and do not be satisfied until you have reached that point or gone beyond it. You will find, usually, that you can attain success more easily in some directions than in others. Do not be satisfied to be commonplace or merely to pass, but make up your mind that in some line or other you are going to be as good as the best at least, for your success in any one line of endeavor will always give you more likelihood of success in anything else which you may undertake. The boy who gets away creditably with a difficult course in mathematics or with an examination in Vergil which he finds distasteful, will be so much the better able through self-confidence and persistence to win the girl of his choice or to make a creditable record at track. As you do well the intellectual tasks which are set for you today, you will accomplish more easily and more accurately the duties which are laid upon you twenty years from now, no matter what these duties may be.

By far the largest percentage of poor work or of failures in high school comes not from the fact that boys are stupid or badly prepared in the elementary schools, or be-

cause the amount of work they are asked to do is unreasonable or beyond their grasp, but because they do not do their work seriously or thoroughly at first; they have no well-organized plan of study; they are procrastinating, and wake up to the fact too late, that their studies are a real business to which they should have been giving regular attention from the beginning. Jones told me only yesterday that if he had learned his conjugations and his declensions carefully and thoroughly when he began his high school study of Latin, he would have been saved years of uncertain floundering through the classics. If you would give more careful attention to elementary algebra, you would not have heart failure later when you take the required courses in college mathematics. If boys took their work as seriously in September as they do in January or immediately before the final examinations there would be a great many more honor students than failures.

As a rule the task set for the average high school student is a very moderate one, and the amount and the character of the work required quite within the range of his ability. I have known a great many high school boys, but I have known few whose mental equipment was not adequate to the accomplishment of the work they had elected to do if they had gone at it in the right way when it was assigned. The number of "boneheads" is pretty limited.

Have a regular time for study. Of course I appreciate the fact that most high schools have "study periods" between recitations and that a good many boys depend

upon these to furnish adequate time for preparation, or if this should prove inadequate there is always the chance of studying ahead in class and being ready to recite when the teacher calls upon you, but this method is either inadequate or a subterfuge and will not get you anywhere.

"John is so quick at his books," his fond mother tells me, "he never has to study." But I know John is coming up against a great surprise one of these days, for the boy who expects to get what he should out of his studies, ought to have at least a little regular time for hard study at home every day. The boy who never needs to open a book at home may be a bright boy, but he will seldom develop into a well-trained man; he is pretty sure to prove commonplace.

Learn to do things within the time assigned to you. If there are problems to be handed in on Monday, do not put off solving them until the last minute and then have to give an excuse because you did not have time enough to finish them. If your theme is due on Thursday go at it early enough to get it done by that time. The boy who waits for an inspiration or who thinks it will be easier for him to write tomorrow than it is tonight, is more than likely to be fooled. No one but a poet ever waits for an inspiration, and the fellow who gets into the habit of delaying the doing of his work until he feels like it, soon finds that his eagerness for work constantly decreases, while the boy who goes at his work and gets it done in time no matter how he feels about it,

discovers before long that he can work whenever he wants to do so. No man who has regular routine work to do can allow it to be a matter of inspiration or feeling. One of the main things for which brains are trained is that they may be made to work easily whenever the necessity arises.

Perhaps the reason why boys court delay in the accomplishment of assigned work is because there is so much time in which it may be done, and the task set for tomorrow seems so much easier of accomplishment than that which confronts us today; but work always grows more difficult as we allow it to pile up, and one is not, in general, likely to have more time tomorrow than he has today.

Learn to depend upon your own efforts for the accomplishment of your work. I know that there is a certain comradeship developed between two boys who get their work together, and it is sometimes a tremendous timesaver, but it is very seldom best. If the result of study were accomplished when we got the answer to the problem, all that would sometimes be necessary would be to turn to the back of the book. The boy who works out his own problems, as he will usually have to do later in life, develops self-reliance, learns to trust his own judgment, gets the habit of standing on his own feet, and is the more likely to be honest and self-reliant at examination time. If you and Tom are working out the problems in algebra together there is always the tempta-

tion to utilize his work as your own, to trade answers, and in reality to slight half the work. If it is translation instead of mathematics that is being worked out, the poorer student soon learns to rely upon the better and misses the training which comes from working out a hard task alone.

Regularity of work counts for a tremendous lot in any line of business. Once get behind, and the damage is almost irreparable. I was talking to a discouraged high school sophomore today.

"I was a good student last year," he said, "and I'm sure I have brains enough to get on. I had rather light work this half year, and I should have carried it easily. I simply loafed and let the work pile up expecting to do it all in the end. When I awoke to my situation the pile was more than I could crawl over."

Unless any boy at the very beginning learns to work regularly, he will have a hard time to learn later. It is almost impossible to play the ant after one has long been cast in the rôle of the grasshopper.

It is not enough that a boy work regularly, he must apply himself to his work with concentration of mind. The fellow who puts in the most hours is not necessarily the best student. It is the one who works regularly and works hard as well—who has his whole mind on what he is doing—who will accomplish the most and who will get the best development out of his work. As I write this paper, I have been watching a young fellow sitting

on the porch across the street from my office window, a book in his hand and his chair tilted back against the house wall. He is whistling to a passing dog now; he was engaged in conversation with a mate a few moments ago; he hailed the ice cream cone man and did business with him at the beginning of the hour; and yet he will tell his friends at dinner time how hard he was grinding at his lessons all the afternoon.

One of the poorest students with whom I have had to do was as regular in his work as the phases of the moon and as sure to be at his book as taxes, but he worked too much, and he had no concentration. He would go to sleep while writing his theme as readily as I did while reading it. He worked without method and without application, and so he failed to carry anything. The best student I have ever known—and by that I mean not only the man who was best in his studies, but in the “other things”—put in a very few hours at his work, but he studied every night, and when he worked his whole mind was directed toward what he wished to accomplish; he did not let anything come between him and what he was doing, and when he was through, he stopped and put his work away. He had more leisure time at his disposal than any of the rest of us. He won through regularity and concentration, and these qualities are usually to be discovered when a man, high school student or otherwise, succeeds. It is possible to learn concentration. One must have interest, he must have the will to

do, and he must be wide-awake enough to realize what it is that he is trying to accomplish.

But the "other things" are important; only slightly less important in fact than the studies themselves. However much a boy may be devoted to his work he can not study all the time, and he should not be allowed to do so even if it were possible. As I remember my own secondary school course and try to estimate, as it is impossible justly to do, its present worth to me, I am inclined to value most highly some of the things that were connected only remotely with the studies I was pursuing. These external things naturally would have been of little value to me unless I had carried the work I was taking, for matters were so conducted in our home circle that a place would readily have been found for me on the farm had I shown any chronic inaptitude in securing grades. But granting that ability, these "other things" seem to me of the greatest value. As an instructor I can seldom find much excuse for the boy who does not carry his work in high school; but the one who does not do more than this, no matter how high his scholastic standing may be, has missed a very large part of what every one should get from high school training. School life is very much a community life. No one can justly live to himself alone, and profit greatly from the life. He has his own private individual work to do, it is true, and he should do it; but he has also his obligations to his fellow students and to the community at large, and these he may not shirk.



I heard a boy once boast that during his high school course he had never cut a class nor seen an athletic contest. I am not sure that either fact was a virtue, and notwithstanding that he now wears a badge won by high scholastic attainments, I think that his training and his sympathies might have been broader if his school interests had, perhaps, been varied enough to make it desirable for him sometimes to cut a class, or interesting to attend a ball game. I think his influence now would be wider. A boy's studies should give him familiarity with ideas, and training in principles; and "other things" in which he interests himself should make him acquainted with people, and furnish him some opportunity to get experience in the management of erratic human beings. Whether the business which a young man finally takes up happens to be designing gas engines or preaching the gospel, he will find daily opportunities for the exercise of both sorts of training.

It is a somewhat overworked and jaded joke that class valedictorians generally bring up as street car conductors or as hack drivers, not that I should like to underestimate the value of any one of these positions or the amount of intelligence required successfully to perform the work of either one of these worthy offices—and though, perhaps, it is a joke, one can occasionally find instances of students of the highest scholastic standing filling the most commonplace positions simply from lack of initiative or ability to assume leadership. One such dropped in on me only a few

days ago. I did not remember him at first; he seemed commonplace, unaggressive, without diplomacy. When he mentioned his name I recalled that he had been valedictorian of his class a dozen years ago. He had got nowhere; he had lost every position he had held because he had no ability at leadership; he could not adjust himself to the peculiarities of other people. He was always at loggerheads with his boss. The lack of ability to get on with men often keeps a young fellow as it had kept him, from an opportunity to utilize his educational stock in trade. Social training then, association with man, is a very desirable thing.

There are many ways in which such an association may be cultivated. The ordinary method which simply for the sake of enjoyment takes a boy out among his fellows—and sometimes his fellows' sisters—is neither to be ignored nor worked too strenuously. Parties and picnics, social calls, and long quiet strolls when the moon is full are, in moderation, helpful, perhaps, but they should not be developed into a regular practice. Even a good thing may be overdone. It is exceedingly desirable that one should learn how to manage his hands and feet and tongue, but it is quite possible to devote too much time to acquiring skill of this sort. The boy who omits all social life makes a mistake; the fellow who devotes a large part of his time to it is mushy.

I have a strong belief in the value of athletics. It is true that some of the poorest students I have ever known

have called themselves athletes because their main interest was physical rather than intellectual, but I have known more good students than poor ones who have been prominent in athletic events. The boy who goes into athletics sanely has a good chance of developing a strong body; both tradition and necessity demand that he live a temperate, healthy life, and his thinking powers and his ability to do mental work are likely to be stimulated by the regular exercise he must take. It is true that few students ever do themselves damage from working too hard, but a great many develop chronic indigestion and physical worthlessness from sitting in stuffy rooms and taking no exercise. I should not go so far as to say that the athlete is usually a better student than the fellow who does not go in for such things, but he is usually a better all-around man than the other fellow. He has more stamina and endurance, and because of his symmetrical development he is more likely to make a success later in life than boys who have had no such training. For this reason as well as for the pleasure and relaxation in it, every student who can should go in for some athletic game.

There are a good many societies in high school which will bid for the boy's time and attendance. Many very worthy people think most of these are wholly bad, and advise the boy to steer clear of them all as he would dodge smallpox and the tax collector. Most of these organizations have their uses, however, and in the majority of cases they are good. Most boys would be helped by

joining a debating society both on account of the personal associations which they would cultivate, and for the training it would give them in speaking and writing. It is a great asset to be able to say easily what one has in his mind. Dramatics, declamation contests, musical organizations, stunt shows in general give one a training which will later in life repay many times the effort entailed in the practice for these activities.

There are political opportunities in high school which should not be overlooked. Class officers and manager-ships must be filled. Such work offers an excellent chance for the development of business sense and business experience, and for widening one's influence and control of men. The necessary relationships which political activity requires develop resourcefulness, shrewdness, and a general understanding of human nature. It gives training in organizing men, in planning operations, in meeting unexpected situations. It is one of the best experiences a boy can have. It is often, too, a strong test of a boy's character, for, even in high school politics, there is constant opportunity for graft, for trickery, and for dishonesty. The boy who goes through such a contest and comes out clean has had a test and a training which will prove invaluable to him.

The four years you are in high school should mean something more than the mere acquaintance with facts, or the acquiring of information or the passing of examinations; it should give you a knowledge of other

boys. But in getting this second sort of training you will usually have to choose between several of many interests. If you elect to do one thing, you must usually omit the rest. A fellow may occasionally be president of his class and at the same time captain of the football team, but ordinarily one of these positions is quite sufficient to occupy his leisure moments. If you try too much, you will fail in all. If you get into the real life of the school and do something to direct its current, you will usually be better fitted to meet the unexpected in the more strenuous world into which you must go when you enter college or take up the practical work of life, than you would be if you simply did your school work and stayed in your own little shell.

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## EXAMINATIONS AND GRADES

Most students in high school quite seriously believe that examinations have been devised by teachers merely to torture a group of defenseless young people. They see in examinations neither pleasure nor benefit, they look forward to their approach with premonition and pain, and give a relieved sigh when each series of examinations is safely past.

"The teacher knows what a fellow will do before he takes an examination," the high school boy argues, "so why can't he let it go at that and give a man a grade without working him to a shadow or scaring him to death in getting ready for an examination?"

When I was in college we had a shrewd old instructor, lazy we thought him at times, whom we could never quite make out. His grades were always in the college office within a surprisingly short time after the examination had ceased, so that there was a suspicion in the minds of a good many of us that he never read his examination papers at all, but dumped them into the waste paper basket and went home to enjoy his cigar.

The trouble was that no one quite liked to take the risk to prove his suspicion. We threatened often to test out our theories by not studying for the quiz and by writing down any sort of bunk that came into our heads

when we got into the classroom, but these threats seldom got further than talk. Fred Waterman tried it once and flunked the course, whether because the old man read the paper and discovered Fred's trick, or because he had already scheduled Fred for defeat, we could never quite determine. As it was the majority of us went on boning up for the examination and sweating through it, fearful that after all that the instructor *might* read the papers. I always meant to ask him after I got out of college whether he did or not, but I could never quite get up my nerve. I can see now that whether he read them or not made very little difference. He was a good judge of human nature. He knew us well enough so as seldom to do us any especial intellectual injustice, and he kept us guessing so that we had to make the review and the preparation that he wanted us to make.

The boy is right who says that the teacher generally knows pretty well beforehand what his students are worth and what they will know on an examination. The teacher is just as sure, however, if he is any judge of human nature, that it is the getting ready for the examination and the actually taking of it that makes the boy sure of what he knows. If he knew that he did not have to take an examination the boy would seldom make any special mental effort. Our old high school trainer used to know pretty well what Jim Whalen would do in the race for which he was practicing, though Jim seldom made any remarkable showing before the time of actual contest.

It was the thought of the race itself that put nerve into Jim. It was the contact with the other fellows and the stimulus of competition that urged him on and made him win. Jim would never have been much of a runner unless he had been put into a race, and no one knew the fact better than the trainer. It is the same way with a boy in examinations.

A good many schools follow the practice of excusing from final examinations all students whose daily work averages above a certain grade. I know a good many high school boys who have never taken a final examination and who would not know how to do so creditably. It is a perfectly easy matter, if he is alert while in the classroom and regular in his class attendance, for a boy to keep his daily grades up and still to have very little general grasp of the subject. I have just answered a letter from the father of one of our freshmen in college. The boy has been dropped at the end of his first year for poor scholarship, and the father finds it difficult to understand why.

"George was always a good student in the high school," he wrote. "He never had to take an examination, and I can not see why he had done so badly in college."

In college George was required in his final examination to present a general view of the whole subject-matter covered in his course; he found it necessary to systematize his knowledge and to present his facts in an orderly fashion, and he had had no previous practice in doing this



sort of thing. It was quite easy to see why he had failed. He was working under a new system, and he had not adjusted himself to it.

I have seldom seen a boy who was so smart in high school that he was excused from all his examinations who, without unusual effort, was able to do well in college. Such boys have a good many facts, possibly, in their possession, but when they want to use them, they don't know where they are. They have been mislaid or so jumbled up with other things that it is impossible to disentangle them. Knowledge is of little use to any one unless it is available. I have all sorts of tools about the house, but if when I want to drive a nail I discover that the hammer is gone, and I am forced to use a flat iron, of what service to me is the hammer? A boy may have innumerable items of information somewhere about his brain, but if when he finds a use for facts it is impossible for him to organize or to recall them, he is about as well off as if he did not have them at all.

The best possible use of an examination is that it necessitates an organization of knowledge. A boy must get his facts into some sort of order if he is to do his best in a limited time. He must have what he has learned laid out before his mental vision so that he can put his hands on it readily if it is called for. I am often an on-looker at surgical operations. Nothing in this sort of experience interests me more than the preparations

which are always made before the actual work of the operation begins. There is the movable tray standing ready by the operating table with its array of instruments all laid out in the most careful order. There are sponges, and needles, and all sorts of thread, and detractors, and forceps all in their places, and so arranged that whatever may be needed in the emergency that is likely to occur will be ready for use. It is some such preparation as this that a boy should make who is getting ready for an examination. He does not know what is going to be called for, but if he has his information in logical order he is ready for any call.

An examination, or at least the preparation which any sensible boy will make in getting ready for an examination, is an excellent training in judgment. The boy, as he goes over the material he has studied, must determine what is fundamental, what is important, and what without danger may be discarded. This requires thought, discrimination, and care. It is not so difficult to pick out each day the important facts of a lesson as it is at the close of a year's or a half year's study to select what one should carry with him from the mass of facts that has been considered. Knowing that he will be required to do this, a boy will study with a very different purpose than he would show if he were convinced that when a day's lesson is learned, he is through with it for all time.

Examinations are meant to test a student's resource-

fulness, his ability to meet a new situation, to assemble facts in a different way than he had been accustomed to do, and from them to draw new conclusions.

"I never heard of some of the things the teacher asked us today," one of my neighbor boys announced following a final examination. "I'm sure a lot of the answers were not in the book."

It always seems an injustice to a boy to be asked on an examination anything the answer to which can not easily be found by turning to the book. But really the best sort of question to ask is the one that requires the searching of a boy's brain rather than the book before he finds the proper answer. Nobody in real life ever finds a problem presented just as it is in the book, but, if he has learned to analyze and to organize his knowledge, the one in the book helps him to the solution of the one in real life. The lawyer seldom if ever finds the series of circumstances surrounding his first important case like any particular illustration he has studied; the surgeon taking out his first appendix can seldom put his finger on the disturbing organ at the point where the books say it ought to be. It is the thing that isn't in the book that we are always running up against in practical life, and it is a very good experience to get used to in the examinations taken in school.

The greatest howl which is set up by the high school boys I know against examinations is caused by the so-called "catch-questions" which are frequently introduced

into examinations, and by the fact that examinations are frequently sprung upon an unsuspecting and unprepared class without announcement.

"If he had only told us ahead of time that we were going to have the quiz," the boy protests, "it wouldn't have been so bad; but there we were absolutely unprepared. It wasn't fair."

Here again there is something to be said on the other side. It is the purpose of an examination just as much to discover what a boy does not know as it is to find out the facts he is acquainted with. It is very helpful to a teacher at times as well as to his students to stumble upon the weak places in his teaching and in their knowledge. The "catch question" often tests the alert mind. All through life a boy will find that there is likely to be some one lying in wait to catch him by a trick or a technicality. He might as well get used early in life to recognizing these situations and meeting them. If only the expected happened, the world would be a very much easier place in which to live than it now is. I try to figure out each morning as I go to my office what form of student irregularity I shall during the day have to adjust, but I am never successful. No two days are alike; every problem which is presented has something in it unforeseen and unlike anything else which I have ever met. If we knew when we were going to die we should be upset considerably, no doubt, but I am not at all sure that we should meet the grim destroyer with any more composure than we shall when he comes upon us

unannounced. It is the way most experiences of life come, so why not examinations?

The hard examination is frequently objected to on the ground that it is not a fair test of a student's knowledge. It is a good thing for every boy, however, occasionally to give his brain a stiff work out. Our real physical and intellectual strength is tested not so much by what we can accomplish as we loaf along lazily through life, as by what we can do when we are pushed into a corner and forced to work or to think our hardest. The boys who came through the horrors of the Argonne or of Belleau Wood never suspected what they could stand until put to the test, and their changed point of view reveals the fact that they were strengthened by the test. One young boy I know got three meals out of eleven and was without sleep for three days, and I suppose he had an easy time as compared with what other boys suffered. Of course, if a boy lies down and refuses to do his best when he comes up against a hard mental test, the advantage to him of such an experience is nullified.

An examination is a good game, if a boy will think of it so, a game which it is possible to learn to play skilfully. He must first of all keep his head if he is going to make a good score. He should go into the game in good condition and with good spirits. I know many fellows who get ready for an examination by studying far into the night or all night, trying in a few hours to cram into their brains all sorts of miscellaneous information. They get little sleep, and they

go to their examination stupid and irritable and in no condition to meet either the unexpected or the difficult. One of the best preparations for a stiff examination is a good night's sleep and a cold shower on rising. An intelligent review of the ground covered every one ought to take, but he should not try to do this at one sitting at the expense of his regular hours for sleep. This review is purely a matter of judgment to determine what is essential and what is not. It is the steady, regular, daily work that gets a fellow into condition for an examination more than the feverish cramming the night before the test comes.

Next to a rested body, a calm mind and a reasonable self-confidence are most helpful in passing a good examination, and these states of mind are much more fully within a boy's personal control than we are sometimes willing to admit. Worry and fear and lack of faith in our own ability to do a task well we largely induce in ourselves, or eliminate from our minds as the case may be. Self-control is a good deal a matter of will, and the boy who is getting ready to take an examination can exercise it very much to his advantage. Whenever a player in any game allows himself to get "rattled," then his game goes to pieces.

One should go at an examination in an orderly fashion. If you will watch a good whist player you will see that he arranges his cards carefully before he leads so that he can determine easily what the strength of his hand is. He tackles first the thing that he is sure of. So a boy going into an examination should get a grasp of the whole situation

before he begins his solution. He should read the entire examination paper before he begins to write, and should take stock of the requirements and of his assets. He should adjust his time to the length of the task before him. I have seen a good many boys fail an examination because having met something difficult at the outset, they gave most of their available time to the solution of this problem and had no time left for the remainder of the examination which they might have found relatively simple.

The best way from my experience to "hit an examination hard" is to answer first and as rapidly as possible all the questions the answers to which seem easy or obvious. This is quite possible, since students are seldom if ever required to write their answers in any definite order. By safely and quickly disposing of a reasonable share of the examination, the boy gains confidence, he realizes that he is probably doing fairly well, and he can divide the remainder of his time between the questions that seem to him to require more thought and care. His very satisfied state of mind will help clear his brain and steady his nerves for the doing of the task that is more difficult.

During all this time he ought to be giving some attention to the order and form of his answers. A neatly written, orderly arranged examination paper, other things being equal, will draw a higher grade by several per cent than another one which may contain the same information badly put together. We are all unconsciously attracted

by the shop whose windows display a tasteful and orderly arrangement of wares. Any jumble annoys us even if it be a jumble of things otherwise pleasing and attractive. Arrange your answers, therefore, so that they look well. If possible put them down so that the instructor can readily grasp what you are trying to say, and will not have to waste his time and his patience in digging out your reasoning. Number or letter the subdivisions of your answers if necessary. Write legibly. I have thrown aside many an examination paper disgusted because it was almost impossible to determine the identity of the written words. Don't crowd your material; paper is of less value than your instructor's eyesight or peace of mind. The very fact that you seem trying to make what you say clear and easy of comprehension predisposes the instructor in your favor.

It sometimes pays to guess, if one is not certain of his facts. Of course, it is a weak player who is always uncertain, and a weak boy who hasn't some things definitely in mind. But on occasion it is best to take a chance, and if you are wrong to take the consequences. Even the best of us has to bluff once in a while, and just so one doesn't get the reputation for regularly doing it, no harm is likely to be done. It is better to be struck out trying to hit the ball than it is to be sent back to the bench never having swung the bat.

I have spoken of examinations as a game. I should like to have every boy feel that it is an honest game, an honor-



able gentleman's game, which he must play squarely, depending upon his own skill and his own knowledge to carry him through.

"But I had to pass," a boy said to me once in justification of the fact that he had been caught cribbing.

He was entirely mistaken. Nobody has to pass, and nobody should pass unless he does so honestly. The boy who gains his grades through cribbing, is little better than a common thief. There are a thousand forms and methods of getting help illegitimately in an examination, from cribbing from your neighbor's paper to bringing books and elaborately disguised "ponies" to class, but no one who cares for honesty and for his reputation will have anything to do with any of these. In truth they seldom help a great deal. I am convinced that it could be shown, if the proper investigation were made, that the cribber loses on the whole more than he gains not only in self-reliance and strength of character but in the accuracy of the information which he puts down, which would be more dependable if he relied upon his own brains. There is the greatest satisfaction always in feeling after an examination that one has done a good piece of work. There is the greatest satisfaction in being able to feel that whatever the result of the test you have done your best and that you have played a clean square game. I always feel proud of the boy who can say after he has taken a quiz,

"Well, whatever my grade is, what I handed in was entirely my own." Like Paul he can say, "I have fought

a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

One of the stock arguments against examinations is that they are not fair.

"I could have answered almost anything else in the book," the boy who has just been through an examination protests. "He asked me just the things I didn't know."

This is, of course, virtually admitting that what the teacher had considered fundamental, the boy had thought of as trivial, and tends to prove that his mind had not been especially alert during the recitation periods. It is not possible that the teacher, in making a comprehensive set of examination questions, should have selected only those details with which the student was not familiar unless the student had shown little attention to what had been going on in the class recitation. Even a poor teacher makes pretty clear during the class work some of the points at least which he considers important.

I have never doubted that there are times when an examination strikes even a good student pretty hard, just as in playing a game one is sure at times to draw a poor hand or to have a bad run of luck. But just as surely he will stumble upon the easy test when everything seems to be coming his way. Sometimes, when he has apparently made little preparation, the quiz seems as easy as taking candy away from a baby. In such a case, however, I have yet to hear the first claim that examinations do not fairly

measure a boy's ability. It is the average, and not the single test that truthfully measures a student's accomplishments.

I always like to hear a group of high school boys discussing grades. From such discussions, of which I have heard not a few, I would draw the conclusion that from the high school boy's point of view at least, grades do not indicate fairly a boy's accomplishment in any subject. Grades are in no sense an index of a student's real ability and do not show what he has "got out of a subject." They do not suggest anything of what he is likely to accomplish after he is through with school and college and has gone into the practical work of life. If a mistake has ever been made in a boy's grade, and such mistakes the boy admits are legion, it has always been that he has been marked lower than he deserved. I have never yet heard a boy complain that his teacher had given him a grade higher than he was entitled to. The assigning of grades, he is convinced, is very much a lottery. The teacher very likely writes the names of his students on slips of paper and puts them in one hat, and a series of grades on other slips and puts these in another hat, pulls out a name and then a grade and thus settles each boy's fate. It is a pretty generally accepted doctrine that nothing gives a teacher so much or so exquisite joy as to be able to flunk a boy. The more he flunks the more pleasure he gets out of his work.

To begin with, grades are symbols only; they should never be taken quite literally. They are meant merely to

indicate the difference between poor and excellent work. The raising or the lowering of the passing grade in any school would seldom if ever influence the number who would be passed or failed. For instance, in the school which I attended seventy-five was the passing grade. At a similar institution which a boy friend attended in another country, thirty was the passing grade, and yet no larger a percentage of the students were passed in his school than in mine. The only difference was that in the school with the lower passing grade it was possible to show a greater variety of ability, and the student in his institution who was given the very high grade was entitled to somewhat more distinction than was the man who got the high grade in my institution. Students argue often that because the passing grade in a school is high the standard of excellence in that school is necessarily higher than in a school where the passing grade is lower. There is little or nothing to such an argument.

To a very large degree grades are an index of the character of the work that a student is doing. A single grade either high or low can not fairly determine an individual case, for a single grade may be the result of luck, good or bad, or, perhaps, it is better to say of chance; but a boy's average grade may in general fairly be taken to represent either his ability or his industry. If his grades are uniformly high he is either a quick, clever thinker or a hard worker; if they are regularly low, he is either dull or lazy.

"Now, father," I heard Frank explaining to his parent when questioned as to the cause of a particularly modest showing in grades at the end of a half year, "I got a lot out of those courses which doesn't show in my grades."

He was really dodging the issue as was Adam when caught with the apple or Cain when his brother was missing.

If a boy has actually secured any logical or definite information from a course the chances are overwhelmingly in favor of his being able to make clear to the teacher that this is the case. The boy who writes a poor examination is in the same class as the teacher who presents his subject badly—ten chances to one the matter is muddled in his own brain. If you will pin such a person down to actual "brass tacks," you will find that his knowledge is not clear-cut and definite.

It is not at all difficult to find illustrations of the high school and college student whose scholastic record has been commonplace or poor who later in life has made a distinct if not a brilliant business or professional success. Neither is it impossible to find illustrations of the high school and college valedictorian whose place in middle life is commonplace and whose success was never attained. The fact, however, that such cases stand out so clearly, that they make such a vivid impression upon our minds, only tends to prove that they are rather rare. The dullard in school is not hopeless; he simply has far less chance to make good

than has the student who has given a good account of himself. The bright student in school and college does not have a monopoly on success; he simply has considerably more than an even chance with the other fellows to make good.

I have followed pretty carefully the record of fellows whom I knew in school and college twenty-five or thirty years ago. There are a few who did well scholastically who have done little in the positions which they have since held. In most cases, however, it is not difficult to understand why; they had alert minds without self-reliance or initiative. There are some, also, whose scholastic record was little to their credit, who are now leaders in the business or the profession which they have taken up. Here, too, the explanation is not hard to find. They had conceit and self-reliance; they were good judges of human nature, and their independence and personal magnetism outweighed their lack of ability to think and reason logically. On the whole, however, I can say that in more than ninety per cent of the cases of the fellows I have known in school and college, the success of these men could be very accurately measured by the grades which they received while they were in the high school or college. It is as sensible to claim that character is worthless, because it is possible to show that a crook occasionally gets by with his crookedness, as it is to claim that grades neither indicate a boy's success in school nor his probable progress later in life. The facts prove otherwise.

"I'm not working for grades," I hear boys say repeatedly. "I don't believe grades show much about a fellow's work."

Fathers, too, echo the same sentiments, but never so far as I can now recall, when their sons were getting anything creditable in the way of grades. It was the defense of their son's commonplace work which they were throwing up. It was another case of the fox who, when he saw that he could not reach the grapes, consoled himself by declaring them sour. It would be quite as sensible and convincing an argument, it seems to me, for a runner to say, "I don't care what time I make in the race; it doesn't seem to me that time means anything when a fellow's in a race. Just so one gets around the track a certain number of times is all that is necessary;" or for a base ball player to declare, "I don't count much on the base hits or the runs a man makes; I went to bat just as many times as any one did."

High grades are an indication of accomplishment; they show, usually, correct thinking, logical arrangement, and a grasp of fundamentals. Sometimes, it is true, they are the result of dishonest methods, or of a well-trained memory, but such cases are the exception and not the rule. The low grade, in general, suggests the commonplace student who is either slow in his thinking processes or unwilling to work. No one should be satisfied to do poorly. Every business man, every professional man, every boy in high school ought to be ambitious to excel in his special line of

endeavor. It is not enough just to come out even at the end of the year or just to get by at the examination. One should have pride enough to be eager to be as good as the best.

I have been a teacher for a good many years and I know that the great body of teachers want their students to do well, and are as proud as the boys themselves when their students do attain scholastic distinction. The teacher who takes delight in seeing his students fail can occasionally be found, but only rarely, I am sure.

As I was walking home to lunch during examination time I came upon one of our instructors. He was dragging himself along very slowly and looking the picture of gloom. He is at best not a hilarious person, and he has the reputation of being a rather hard taskmaster in his classes and one who takes a certain pleasure in seeing the downfall of the unambitious student.

"What's on your mind, Fred?" I asked.

"I haven't slept well the last few nights," he admitted. "A lot of my boys haven't done well on the examinations, and I can't see why. I hate to flunk them. The fact is I've read some of the papers three or four times trying to find enough in them to pass the fellows. I'm late now in handing in my grades, and I'm just trying to determine what I ought to do."

I laughed. I am sure not one of his students would have believed me if I had told them that Professor Frederick Brown, the cold-blooded, hard-hearted instructor who



took such delight in flunking every one possible, was lying awake of nights trying to devise some honest way to pass the boys; but that is what really happens more often than we imagine. Any good teacher wants his students to do well; any ambitious boy wants to get good grades.

## THE LEISURE HOUR

Every boy has leisure—much more, often, than he thinks. There are the hours during the day when no tasks are set, the weeks of the summer vacation when there is frequently nothing definite regularly to occupy his time, and there are the long winter evenings when even study will not suffice to take up all his available time. More often than otherwise he is left to himself during these hours and days of leisure, and what he does to occupy the time affects materially both his present and future happiness and his character.

One of our most respected Southern colleges has, among other customs, an unwritten tradition that the young fellow just out of high school and entering college should not be found loafing around the "Corner," a well-known place with its own particular attractions and allurements as well as its own particular dangers. The reason for this restriction, if a reason were necessary, is, no doubt, that it is not thought good for a young boy to begin his college career by cultivating the habit of loafing on street corners and picking up the uncertain acquaintances wont to congregate in such places; it is even worse for a high school boy so to occupy his time.

If any one in our town wanted to find Bert, if he were not in school or at home, he was as certain to be located

at the pool hall as his father on Sunday morning was sure to be found at church. Bert knew no other recreation; it was his particular indoor sport, and though he developed no skill in pool to speak of, he was quite content to spend his money and waste his time in shooting the balls into a pocket. He has no other recreation today. He is not unique in any way. If, out of his working hours, you are looking for any boy with whom you are acquainted there is quite likely to be some particular corner where he leans against the wall, some definite place which draws him, some sport which makes for him a regular and an irresistible appeal, a mandolin, or a golf club, or a billiard cue that drops readily into his hand. As I go down town every day after my work is done, I can usually run in to the same old loafers talking politics or whittling the store boxes that cumber the sidewalk, the same young boys doing nothing in the same places or kidding the girls that pass by on the street.

A certain amount of leisure is necessary for everyone, man or boy. All work and no play not only makes Jack a dull boy, but it retards his development, it sours his disposition, and it very likely turns him into a pretty irritable and unpleasant companion. No one can work all the time without reducing his efficiency, and without wearing out his nervous system. A little vacation, even if it is only an hour or two in the woods or a half day fishing at the river, sends one back to his work rested and with more vim and more interest and enthusiasm. I have no doubt that a good part of the purpose of the creator when he inaugu-

ated the custom of working six days and resting the seventh was to forestall some fool man who would probably start the custom of working all the time and so eliminate vacations and reduce the general efficiency of mankind. As a class, we Americans have too few leisure hours.

Of course growing boys need more leisure time than do other people. They are only beginning to develop concentration, their bodies tire, and they grow weary very soon of doing one thing, and so need a change; their high-strung nervous systems need relaxation, and they are helped in the development of self-reliance by being left for a considerable time to do as they please. One has only to see the pinched, white, tired faces of the children who are ground down by long hours of toil to realize how it dwarfs and stunts and discourages a child to have no recreation, to have no time in which he may do as he pleases. The boy with no leisure is robbed of his youth; and youth at best is all too short.

It is really astonishing, however, if one has never before done so, to discover just how many hours in a day or a week or a month one has at his own disposal—in fact just how much time one wastes, or idles away, or uses for one's own pleasure or recreation; and boys have far more than other and older people. A boy came to see me not long ago who was complaining because he had so much work to do and so little time in which to do it, so much drudgery and so little leisure in which to enjoy himself. His was the common complaint of young boys.

"I haven't a minute," was his assertion.

"Won't you keep a record for the next week," I asked him, "of exactly how you spend the twenty-four hours of the day, and bring it back to me?"

I gave him directions as to how the time should be divided: so much for meals, so much for sleeping, so much for school work and study, and so on, and required him to account specifically for the entire twenty-four hours of the day.

"I guess I'm not working as much as I thought," he said when, at the end of the specified time, he came back again. "I'm a good deal more of a loafer than I should have been willing to admit."

His record showed, as yours will quite likely if you will take the trouble to investigate, that nearly one-third of the twenty-four hours of each working day, and much more than that on Saturdays and Sundays was taken up either with doing very trifling things or in actually doing nothing. He had considerable leisure, but he was wasting it. If the boy who thinks he has little or no leisure time will make a similar experiment, he may have his eyes opened. The undeniable fact is that most of us waste our leisure; we get out of it neither pleasure nor profit.

There are few things which more accurately reveal your character than the use that you make of your leisure time or would make of it if you could follow your own desires. If for the next twenty-four hours you could do as you please, go where you want to, and be asked no ques-

tions, what would you do? Some boys would go fishing, some would read a book or build something. I know boys who would stay in bed sleeping most of the time and others who would not go to bed at all; some would play a game or take a trip, and some would do things about which they would not care to speak. It might be very interesting for every boy to think the question out for himself and to answer it.

Many people, boys and men, are quite at a loss to know what to do with leisure time and quite upset if unexpectedly they are confronted with an hour or two of leisure and are separated from their ordinary entertainment. Many are like the old citizen in an isolated New England village, who being asked what he did in the winter when the summer tourists with whom he employed his time had gone, replied,

"Wal, mostly I set and think; and sometimes I jest set."

Those who have not trained themselves to think, who have no resourcefulness when left to their own devices, are sometimes forced merely to "set," and to find little pleasure in leisure time and no incentive to thought.

Coming into Atlanta one Sunday morning not long ago, I had as a seatmate an intelligent looking man of middle age who was bemoaning the fact that he was to have an unoccupied day in a city with which he was not familiar. Only two possible solutions of the problem as how best to spend a tiresome day suggested themselves to him—the Sunday newspaper and sleep. Church, music, books, the

woods, a quiet walk—none of these made any appeal to him. He only yawned, bored at the mere thought that here was a whole day at his disposal and positively nothing to do. It was really sad to realize that here was a man whose life was more than half gone and who, when left to himself, was helpless to enjoy it. Some time I intend to write an article on how to spend one's time enjoyably in railroad stations.

One of the most unhappy men I know has an attractive home, a comfortable income, and much leisure. He is not harassed by hard toil or the fear of poverty; but he does not know how to spend his leisure. He has not cultivated any special friendships with people, or interest in them, he does not find enjoyment in reading, he takes no pleasure in the beautiful birds, and flowers, and trees with which he is surrounded. He plays no games, finds no comfort in exercise, and is at his wits end when he has read the *Breeders' Gazette* and the village newspaper. Like the New England farmer the most that he does is just to "set." A boy should cultivate as many interests as possible, should find a hundred interesting and profitable ways to employ his leisure time. In doing so he will be happier and wiser now, and more useful and happy later in life.

A boy's greatest danger and his greatest temptation comes not while he is at work, not while he is busy with something that keeps his brain and his hands employed but when he is free to do as he pleases, when his time is

his own and when he does not know quite what to do with it, when he is out from under any direction but his own personal desires. It is only another illustration of Satan finding work for idle hands to do. Practically every bad habit that a boy develops, every moral misstep that he makes, may be traced to the misuse of leisure time. Any boy who has learned to smoke or to swear or to drink or to gamble or to be dishonest or to associate with vulgar or lewd women will admit, if he will recall his first offense, that in nine cases out of ten, he slipped at some vacation time, or at some time when he was free from the regular obligations of his daily work and with other fellows was left to his own devices. It is a story generally of "nothing to do" and "out for a time."

That was Tom Brown's experience as told in the story with which every high school boy is familiar. He was saved, fortunately, from the great temptation, but it was more through good luck than good management. If Arthur Donnithorne had had more to do, if his leisure time had been spent in something besides idleness and the pursuit of selfish pleasure, the tragedy of Hetty Sorrel in *Adam Bede* might very easily have been averted.

There is a good reason for this condition of affairs. A boy relaxes at vacation time, he lets down, he is somewhat off his guard, and he therefore is more open to suggestion. It is at week ends, and Christmas time, and summer vacations, it is on the night when he is allowed to stay out after his regular bed time that the temptation comes. He wants



to be a "good fellow," he can not bear to be thought a quitter; when something a little daring or risqué is proposed, he often lacks the courage to stand out against it, and the inevitable happens. Disease and drunkenness and irregularities of all sorts are far more imminent at vacations than at any other time. The most dangerous times are when he is excited by victory or depressed by defeat or when he has so much leisure on his hands that he grows bored with it and must break loose into the irregular in order to relieve his pent-up feelings. I believe in athletics, but it must be confessed that the athletic contest is responsible for a good many boyish derelictions, because the excitement of victory or the despondency of defeat throws the boy out of himself for the time being and makes him an easy victim to the temptations which are always lying in wait.

It is nearly always an unfortunate thing for a boy to have no regular duties or responsibilities aside from his school work. The most unhappy and the most discontented boys I know, the laziest and the most dissipated, are those whose time before and after school is at their own disposal. They are likely to develop habits of extravagance, to become spendthrifts and loafers, and the loafer is generally ready for any sort of proposition that may come up that will give him a new sensation or a novel experience, immoral or otherwise. Even if the boy with unlimited leisure develops the habit of reading, which in itself is a very creditable one, his tendency will be to be-

come something of a recluse, to shut himself in, and to grow pale and round shouldered and out of touch with other fellows of his age. Every growing boy is better off for having some regular work to do, something physical, if possible, that will harden his muscles and develop his strength and teach him to assume responsibility. Boys usually have to learn to like work as they learn to like olives, by keeping at it until their taste is developed. I know too many boys who would feel humiliated to be caught washing the car, or mowing the lawn, or taking care of the furnace, but any boy, no matter what the financial standing of his father may be, is made stronger and more manly and more dependable and happier, if he has a steady regular job to take up a part of his leisure time, and to teach him the dignity of labor and the value of money. I have never known anyone, boy or man, who lost caste by working, or who on the other hand was not helped by doing so.

In conjunction with too much leisure or leisure that is largely without occupation, too much spending money is a bad thing for a boy. When a boy has so much money at his disposal that he needs to give little thought to his expenditures, he is likely to grow selfish, to fall into extravagances, if not to drift into worse things. It is an uncomfortable situation for a boy to have too little money or less than the fellows with whom he regularly associates; it is a dangerous one for him to have so much that he can daily gratify his appetites or satisfy his desires for pleas-

ure. If he does not learn while he is young to make some sort of sacrifice and to deny himself, he will not find it easy later in life.

Granted that there is danger to the young boy who has a considerable amount of leisure, there is, also, to the one who will use it wisely, a great opportunity. Most men who have come up from poverty and ignorance to positions of financial responsibility and intellectual attainment have done so through the regular and wise utilization of their leisure time. One of the best French scholars I know got all his preliminary knowledge during his leisure hours in the army when he was only a young boy. The biographies of well-known men furnish innumerable illustrations of boys who, with little encouragement and less opportunity, by using their leisure hours wisely made themselves ready for positions which would not otherwise have been open to them.

There are various ways in which the high school boy may utilize his leisure time. He may use it, as too many boys do, in the pursuit of so-called pleasures that are actually injurious to his health and to his character. It is not necessary to specify all of the things which are a real injury to a young fellow; one may be pretty well assured, however, that when the high school boy is out every night of the week until long after he should be in bed, whatever he may be doing, he is not attending Sunday school. When boys are found nightly hanging about street corners or talking to careless silly girls, they are not picking up

information that will be of any particular service to them or developing habits that will better fit them for citizenship. Few boys develop vicious or immoral habits with the idea of continuing them. It is the fling of the moment, they say, and they promise themselves and their friends, often, that their derelictions are to be short lived. Experience shows, however, that the high school boy who even for a brief period falls into questionable habits finds it no easy matter to separate himself from them. Experiences of all sorts, at his age, sink deep into his consciousness and are hard to eradicate—psychologists tell us that such impressions are eradicated with far more difficulty than are those which come later in life. Fortunately, the larger percentage of boys are saved from such experiences.

Most of the young boys whom I know do not spend their time viciously but foolishly. They are not during their leisure developing useful knowledge or physical strength, or cultivating habits or tasks that yield them much present gratification or insure future happiness or usefulness, most of their activities being only momentary gratification.

"What did you do yesterday, before and after school?" I asked Frank a few days ago. Frank is aged seventeen and is making a feeble attempt to get through the junior year in high school. His father is a well-to-do citizen who has established himself in his present business by long and consistent hard work. He usually looks

after his own furnace and occasionally mows his own lawn. I have even caught him washing his car or putting up the screens to his house. Frank has unlimited leisure and doesn't know a lawn mower from a cream separator. He knows how to drive a car but is ignorant of even the crudest methods of washing it. He is always well dressed and spends money freely. He is, in fact, a very pleasant and a very popular boy. He spends his leisure time as most boys in his class do.

"I slept so late in the morning," was his reply, "that by missing my breakfast I barely had time to get to school for my first recitation. At lunch time Paul and I went down to Harris' and had an egg malted milk. After our last recitation for the day we had another drink and then went to the movies. We fooled round until dinner time and took a ride in the car until bed time. In fact, I guess it was a little after bed time, for as nearly as I remember it was about one a. m. when I rolled in."

And this is not unusual; it is his regular program. He seldom if ever studies; he has no interest in athletics; he does not look into a newspaper; he never reads a book. The car and sentimental girls and ice cream parlors and moving picture shows take up practically all of his leisure time which is not given over to lying in bed, or strumming a ukelele. It is a gay and carefree life he lives!

There is little harm, possibly, in racing a motor car about town, but it is, in the long run, an expensive

pastime if it is not sometimes a dangerous one. It is the young boy, usually, who exceeds the speed limit. I can see little real profit or permanent good in most of the vaudeville or moving picture shows. The plays which appear regularly on the screen are frequently full of questionable suggestions if they are not actually vulgar, and at best they are unlikely often to aid in the development of either good taste or good morals; and yet there are many young boys in almost every town who would be unhappy and discontented if they did not attend at least one show a day, and I know many who during the summer time go twice a day. There are far better ways of spending leisure time, and ways which will bring more satisfactory returns both to the young boy and to the man that he will later become.

I was visiting not long ago in a part of the United States with whose trees and birds and flowers I had previously not been familiar. These things were to me both curious and interesting, and I asked a good many direct questions about them. Only one of the six or eight boys with whom I was walking about could give me any satisfactory information as to the names of the trees or the birds or the flowers with which I was not familiar though they were all intelligent in general matters, were graduates of good high schools, and had lived in the community all their lives.

Some of them ventured a guess, but in every case, as I remember, they guessed incorrectly. They were

a little annoyed finally at their apparent ignorance, and one of them determined to show me that he was not wholly unfamiliar with the flora of his region. As we were passing through a park, he pointed out a bed of flowers saying, "Well, I know what those flowers are, anyway: they're phlox." He was really mistaken, though I did not have the courage to tell him so, for they were petunias.

Now, a boy who is fifteen years of age and who has spent any considerable time out of doors ought to have had interest and curiosity enough to learn the names of the plants which he has seen growing about him every day, he ought to be as familiar with common trees and shrubs as he is with the people whom he meets daily on the street. If he had such knowledge, it would enliven every quiet walk which he might take, it would give interest to every journey and help to dispel lonesomeness and gloom; for every bird in the hedges, every vine and shrub and flower which he would see from the car window, would seem like meeting an old friend on the streets of a strange city. The reasons why boys find so little pleasure in long walks into the country or in quiet strolls in the woods when there is no girl along, is because they meet little or nothing that is interesting or familiar; they lack the information and the training necessary to bring them pleasure, though it is information which might very easily be obtained.

There is no method of occupying one's leisure time

that will bring more present and permanent pleasure to a boy than reading. Few boys read the newspapers, and those who do generally confine themselves to the cartoons and the sporting page. I shall have more in detail to say about this subject in another article, so that I shall simply content myself with saying here, that part, at least, of a boy's leisure every day should be devoted to general reading that will stimulate his imagination, keep him informed on what is going on in the world to-day and what was going on centuries ago.

The boy or the man who reads is always safer and happier and has a great advantage over his companion who does not do so. He has a possibility of general intelligence not open to other boys.

Men who have not learned to take regular exercise while they are boys are little likely to do so later in life, and the adult man who engages in no regular exercise or who does not play with some sort of skill an athletic out-of-door game will grow old and ineffective earlier in life than would otherwise be the case, will grow wide of girth or slow on his feet even if he does not actually break down. There is nothing like exercise for keeping one young and active. The youngest, old man that I know, in some ways a boy still at eighty, has played every day for many years, and is still playing, a vigorous athletic game.

Few people will keep up an interest in any athletic game in which they do not show some skill. Everybody



who is normal likes to beat rather than to be beaten, and skill in almost any game which requires physical alertness, unless it be golf, is seldom developed unless one begins in youth. Further than this, if one waits until he is out of high school or college before he takes up any athletic recreation he is likely to argue and to prove the point to himself, that he has not time for such foolishness; his business is too exacting, his responsibilities are too great, things generally would go to the bows if he took the time to learn what his better judgment tells him would be the best thing in the world for him. The high school boy has no such excuse. He has plenty of time, he would be immeasurably benefited by such exercise both now and later in life, and the development of skill is for him so much more possible than for an older man. There are few boys, no matter how thin or fat, heavy or light, tall or short, who could not by persistence develop skill beyond the commonplace in some sort of healthy athletic activity, and who would not from such development derive the greatest pleasure and profit from the mere joy of contest; from physical strength developed, from friendships formed, from self-reliance gained through the defeat of some opponent. Leisure time spent in the development of a strong healthy body will pay as high an interest on the time invested as anything which a high school boy can engage in. It will develop in him moral stamina and control; it will often bring him the respect and the admiration of his fel-

lows and a physical reserve which will be to him a god-send when he needs to call upon it in the emergencies which come sooner or later to all men.

I have a neighbor, a man of education and of ordinary intelligence, who is constantly in mechanical difficulties. If a faucet leaks, he is quite at sea as to what ought to be done to adjust it; if his car gets out of order, he is as much at a loss to know how to fix it as is his ten-year-old son—more at a loss, perhaps, for the boy is learning to use his hands; he can not drive a nail or stoke a furnace, or make anything run that is out of order. If anything mechanical gets out of fix, he stands around as helpless as an infant. He did not when a boy learn to use his hands or to cultivate any mechanical skill.

Every boy of high school age should learn to make things and should develop curiosity enough to want to know how mechanical things are put together and how they run. Tools should not have an awkward feeling in his hands; he should be able to bore a straight hole, to put in a screw correctly, to saw a board evenly, and so to adjust a lawn mower that it will give the lawn a smooth, even hair cut. If he has access to a motor car he ought to figure out its mechanism intelligently enough to understand how to keep it in order and what to do for it when it refuses to work properly. I know boys who have had cars for years who are as confused and helpless when they look under the hood as they would be if they were asked to translate a language with

which they were unfamiliar; they have not used their leisure time to advantage; and yet these are the things which any intelligent boy could learn, and the knowledge of which would be a great asset to him both in pleasure and in usefulness.

There is the opportunity, also, which every boy has during his leisure time for the cultivation of friendships, for the understanding of other boys, for the development of relationships which will continue throughout his whole life. I do not undervalue the good effects which come from a boy's association with girls; in another place I shall speak of these somewhat more at length. I believe, however, that the value of a boy's healthy association with other boys is much greater to him during his high school days than any other association he may have. Time spent in acquiring friends and in learning to know and to understand them is usually well spent. As I go back now over a period of forty years I find no greater satisfaction than in the recollection that I came to know a few boys well, that our friendships deepened as time went on, and if I could choose today whom of all of my friends from whom I am now separated by time and distance I should most like to see, and with whom I should soonest drop into the old time relationship, it would be a boy whom I knew first in district school, with whom I later prepared for college, and who was for two years in college my closest friend. I see him now only at rare intervals, for we are separated by a thousand miles or more, but I am sure that

the leisure time in childhood and youth and early manhood I spent with him was well spent and brought me happiness then and leaves me a pleasant memory today. The experience I had so long ago, any other boy can have if he gives himself to it.

For most of us, boys or men, there are set tasks which occupy definite portions of time. During these periods we are largely the creatures of routine; lessons or routine duties, or business of one sort or another come to us regularly throughout the day, and we have little or no choice but to do them and to ask no questions. We may each of us exercise a certain amount of discretion or individuality in the doing of this work, but in the main it is put before us without our asking, and it is done today in much the same way as it was yesterday. It is only when it comes to our leisure time that the choice of how it may be employed is ours. We are never so much our real selves as during our leisure hours. Eliminating the leisure time which falls to every high school boy during the five working days of the week, there is always Saturday and Sunday in which he is pretty free to follow his own tactics. He can spend his time in things that are trifling or useless or even harmful. He can sleep, or, what is equally bad if not worse, he can sit around doing absolutely nothing but chatter and gossip and loaf. But life is too short even to waste it in youth; there are too many pleasant and profitable things to do, and it is some of these that in these paragraphs I have attempted to suggest. Every boy must

have pleasure, but it should be healthful and stimulating; it should send him back to the regular work which is his to do, stronger, healthier, cleaner, with greater energy and greater ambition. If from your leisure hours you come to your regular work listless and yawning and without ambition or pleasure at the thought of work, if your pleasure has left you tired and irritable, if your recreation, however you spend it, has not in some way made you a better boy and better prepared you for your work, then it has not been spent as it should have been. You should work it out some other way.

## BOOKS AND READING

Printing, which is not such an ancient art after all, helped very much to make books more plentiful. Before printing was invented the man outside of the Church who owned a book or who could get at one easily was almost as rare as the man who kept a pet elephant. There were not many books, and those there were, were hard to get at and had few readers. The ability to read was not so common as today, for schools were not run at public expense, and education was not general and was not compulsory. Books were laboriously lettered by hand and bound with great care. It took a long time to make a book. Sometimes they were chained to the table upon which they lay, so that people might have an opportunity to read them and yet not be able to carry them away. The reading habit was, therefore, not a common one.

Even after printing was introduced, books did not at once become plentiful. For generations, the daily newspaper was almost unthought of. When it was established, it had little circulation excepting in cities, and neither newspapers nor books were generally to be found in the houses of the common people. They could not afford them, and they did not realize either the pleasure or the benefits of reading.

Respect for books, even within the experience of our

grandparents, was much greater than it now is. It was a signal honor to be given a book. When as a boy of ten Jim Justice, our neighbor boy, won a copy of *Robinson Crusoe* as a prize for regular attendance at school, he was looked upon almost with as much respect as today is accorded the returning soldier who has won the Distinguished Service Medal. It is not so in these times. Books are too common; they are too easily obtained and too generally at our disposal.

I ran across grandmother's geography this morning, *The Village Elementary Geography*, standing primly beside Bob's First Year Latin Lessons, on our bookshelves. Bob is my nephew who is in high school. Grandmother's book is yellowed with age, but, save for a few thumb prints, the pages are clean and without dog ears. It is still covered with the bright calico which her grandmother sewed on for her to keep the book from being soiled or injured when the little girl carried it to school. Grandmother's name and the date is on the flyleaf written in a cramped childish hand, for grandmother was only eight when she got the book, and the date is near the beginning of the last century. She always handled the book with the greatest care, for they had respect for books in those days.

Robert's book presents a somewhat different appearance. It was bought only a few months ago, but the cover is torn and battered and hangs by a thread. Inside, the pages are mutilated or missing, and pen sketches

and hieroglyphics are scrawled across the text making it almost unreadable. As I turn through, I find the dignified Cicero wearing a sombrero and smoking a pipe, and Cæsar with a beard done in India ink. The book has suffered every insult and indignity possible to be thought of by a boy of fourteen. Robert knows more than grandmother did at his age, but neither he nor the children with whom he associates have the love and respect for books that grandmother had as a girl.

As for me I should as soon see a dear friend abused as a book I have worked with and come to know and to understand. I do not mind the ordinary wear of use and age any more than I am annoyed by wrinkles in the faces of my friends who are growing old, but intentional indignities hurt me.

Is it because books are so plentiful or so cheap that we care so little about them? Is it because they cost us now no sacrifice, no struggle, no tender thought or anxious anticipation that we think of them so lightly and toss them about so carelessly? I have heard grandmother tell of how happy she was and how proud when her father first put the little geography into her hands. Neither high school nor college students often feel so today.

The story of Lincoln, unable to find a half dozen books in the community in which he lived and willing to work days in order that he might become the owner of a worn and rain-soaked volume of biography seems almost



unbelievable to the young boy of today who spends his money freely on moving picture shows and ice cream sodas, but who would seldom go far or suffer much to get a book, and who, in fact, is often bored if he is called upon to read one.

Books were never so readily within the reach of all as today; newspapers were never before so abundant and so full of varied information as at the present time; a bulky and profusely illustrated magazine that will keep one reading for many hours, may be bought for a dime. There is no one so poor that he can not buy reading matter, or there are not many who are not now within reasonable distance of libraries with free access to the most varied assortment of books and newspapers. Few people, in this country at least, can assert truthfully that there is nothing for them to read. No doubt the very abundance of books, the ease with which we get at them, causes us to value them less than we otherwise should and to respect them less. That which is most difficult to obtain is most valued. Tom Sawyer recognized this fact when he had the garden fence whitewashed by his eager pals. If we had fewer books we should think more highly of books and respect them more. We see them scattered about us so abundantly that we take them like automobiles and aëroplanes as a matter of course.

If a high school boy does not have the reading habit it is certainly not from lack of opportunity to acquire it. In

the elementary school and high school curriculum more time is given to English, including reading, grammar, literature, and composition, than to any other two or three subjects in the school course combined. Perhaps the reason why young people read so badly when called upon orally to interpret a page, and care so little for reading, is that they have so much of it. We can all become satiated with the most delightful things; I have known boys who ate so much cake and ice cream that they never wanted any again.

Another reason, perhaps, why high school and college students (for the difficulty is not confined to the high school) read so badly and take so little pleasure in reading is because all through their school life their taste is forced, they are made to read what is far beyond their ability to understand and to enjoy, and they are taught to cultivate critical judgment rather than appreciation. They analyze what they read when they should be allowed to give themselves over to the pleasure of reading. They attempt to be critics rather than lovers of books. They are told what is good and what effect it should have upon their minds and their emotions, and they play the hypocrite often by pretending to feel what they are told they should feel.

"What do you think," I asked my fourteen-year-old boys in Sunday School a few years ago, "is the best book in the world? What is the best book you ever read?"

"The Bible," one boy piously answered.

"Shakspeare's Macbeth," another literary hypocrite shouted waving his hand in the air. Not one of the boys told the truth; they were afraid to do so. Down in their hearts they were really enshrining Huckleberry Finn or one of the heroes of Nick Carter's exciting tales. They were saying what they thought they ought to say. They were following the example which many of us who are older set for them in our spoken estimate of the fine arts, especially of music and painting. It takes training and experience and education to enjoy the best things in these arts, and many of us have not brought ourselves to the point of really enjoying what is best. We yawn or sleep through a concert, or we stand bored before a great painting praising the artistic product with our lips but getting little enjoyment out of it in our souls, because we do not yet know enough to enjoy it. And that is the way many boys feel about the literature they are forced to read and to criticise in the high school.

There is little doubt in my mind that Mr. William Shakspeare was a great writer of English poetry and of the English drama; he was, perhaps, the greatest writer that we have ever known, but he is not the most easily understood, nor is he ever likely to give the greatest enjoyment to young and immature minds. Even in college it is not common to find a young fellow of eighteen or twenty who picks up a volume of Shakspeare to read for pleasure to fill in an hour of leisure. I confess I was not a little startled a few months ago when an eighteen-year-old

convalescent in our hospital asked me to bring him a book to read while he was getting well.

"What would you like?" I asked, expecting of course that he would say Harold Bell Wright or O. Henry, or suggest a stray copy of the *Cosmopolitan* or the *Red Book*.

"I think I should like to read Henry V," was his reply. The only explanation is that he must have had a rare mind or an unusually inspiring teacher.

I do not wish to suggest to high school boys that they are justified in spending their time on trashy reading. The better things they read and understand and enjoy, the better for them. I am convinced that they are asked to read many books good in themselves, but far beyond their understanding and their appreciation. It is the reading habit which they should cultivate, and no one is likely to get that habit unless reading is a pleasure for him, unless books tempt him when he sees them lying about, and lure him away from his work or from other appealing pleasures. I know few boys who would decline an invitation to a moving picture show in order to finish an interesting book.

There is a good deal said against the reading of trashy books by boys, and I think much that has been said is not without a foundation of truth; the practice is too general. I think I read up to the age of fifteen as much trashy stuff as any normal boy of my age. I read Mary J. Holmes and E. P. Roe and all their clan, from *Edna Rivers* to *Barriers Burned Away*. I went through the goodie-goodie

volumes in our Sunday school library at the rate of two or three a week. I waited with the utmost impatience for the weekly copy of the *Saturday Night* contributed to the family stock of reading matter by our hired man, and containing the most exciting tales of murder, mystery and adventure. I remember still the lurid title of one of these tales—*Bentley Burroughs, or The Skeleton Hand*.

I had something on hand to read all the time, and, fortunately I developed the habit of reading. In the course of events the stock of sensational and sentimental and adventurous stuff gave out, but my appetite still had to be satisfied. I went quite naturally to Dumas and Scott and Cooper and Bulwer-Lytton; to Dickens and Eliot and Thackeray. I even read some poetry at my father's suggestion, and I got a good deal of insight into historical works. Before I was grown, I had read pretty widely, far more widely, in fact, than I should ever under any other circumstances have had the time to do. I am thankful every day that thus early in my life I became acquainted with so wide a range of literature, even if some of the books I read are not now contained in the admirable list suggested by President Eliot. I can not now see how I was hurt in any way. I got enough, after a while, of the poorer stuff and ultimately developed an appetite for something solidier and better.

I do not believe that my experience is unique. I have asked my friends, many of them, whose reputation for clear thinking and balanced judgment in literary matters

is better than my own, and not one of them has any serious regrets concerning his early reading, which was in many cases quite as light as mine. The reading of the poorer forms of literature often makes the good better in contrast. The main thing is that one should get the habit of reading. If that is developed early, the problem of cultivating a liking for what is good and of eventually developing a real interest in what is best, is not so difficult.

The high school boy is at the age when adventure and mystery are most appealing to him. He will learn to read this sort of literature most readily. He might as well be fed on Dumas and Jules Verne and Conan Doyle and Stevenson as upon Nick Carter; he might as well have good English and stimulating healthy adventure as the opposite.

The reading habit is cultivated like any other habit, and the taste for books developed like any other taste, by practice, and persistence. We can learn anything if we want to do so and if we keep at it. The reading habit is a good one because it furnishes us a ready method of getting information, of learning about what has been done and what is doing in the world. We would stagnate if we did not read; we could make little progress in any sort of work without reading. The business or professional man who does not read soon gets to be a back number in his work.

There is nothing that can give one more pleasure than the habit of reading. If one has learned to read and

to enjoy books he need never have a dull or a lonesome moment. No matter where he may be, if he has an interesting book at hand, he can soon in imagination surround himself with interesting scenes and pleasing friends, and his cares and his boredom will vanish. If a boy likes to read, an evening at home alone, a long wait in an otherwise dull railway station, lack of companionship for a time, isolation of any sort, will not only have no horrors for him, but may even be for a time a source of actual enjoyment. I always like a rainy day or a stormy night in winter, or a quiet undisturbed Sunday afternoon, because it furnishes a chance to stay in-doors and to cultivate the companionship of an entertaining book.

When I hear boys, or men, complaining of the fact that Sunday is such a long, dull day, that there is nowhere to go and nothing to do, when I see them yawning with the weariness of leisure and strolling aimlessly down the street tired of existence, I know for one thing that they find little comfort in religion, and for another, that they have not cultivated the reading habit, and so find little pleasure in books. I am always sorry to think what pleasure they have missed, and I wish that I might lead them into the friendships and the companionships which are so easily formed through reading. Think what it must mean not to have known and enjoyed Wilkins Micawber, and King Lear, and Tom Tulliver, and D'Artagnan and Sidney Carton and Colonel Newcome

and Tom Jones, and Becky Sharpe, and all the myriad of interesting characters with which literature is filled. Life must be pretty dull to those whose acquaintance is limited to real people only.

One of the most placid and contented persons I have ever known was an old lady who was totally blind and who was forced for several years to lie in bed a good deal of the time alone. I used to drop in upon her frequently and usually quite unexpectedly. The great surprise to me was that I never found her depressed or with time hanging heavy on her hands. She was uniformly cheerful and happy and with a mind that seemed constantly occupied with something that was interesting and pleasing.

"What do you do to occupy your time and your thoughts when you are so much alone," I asked her once, "especially when you can not see?"

"I visit with my old friends," she said.

Then she went on to tell me that all through early and middle life, although she had had little opportunity for education in the schools, she had been a constant reader. I was amazed to discover how much she had read and how well she remembered it. Now that she was old and blind she went over all these literary experiences in her mind daily, and she got from the recollection infinite pleasure and recreation. Just the day I had been talking to her, she told me, she had been recalling the incidents in Scott's *Heart of Midlothian*



the scenes of which were made more vivid to her from the fact that she had been born in northern England, had visited Edinburgh as a girl, and knew very well, because her own youthful feet had trodden it, the road which Jeanie Deans had taken from Edinburgh to London when she went to plead for her sister's life. Her early reading was the source of hourly pleasure to her, and made quite bearable an existence which might otherwise have been wretched even to contemplate.

No one has so much time at his disposal to learn to read as the young person before he enters high school and during his high school course. More than this, youth is the habit-forming time, as I have said, more than once. If one does not learn the habit of reading then, he is not likely ever to acquire it. It would seem easy to prove that with all the opportunities furnished the boy for reading while he is in the elementary school, and after he enters high school, with the great variety of reading he is required to do, and with the wide range of books from which he may choose, he would learn to like something, he would cultivate his interest, and would continue his acquaintance with books during vacation and after he had graduated from high school. The number of boys, however, who regularly and of their own choice read books while they are in the high school and after they get out is small, and the class of books in which they find interest is often very poor. The training in English in our schools does not develop the

reading habit generally nor does it awaken generally an interest in good not to say the best, literature. I have suggested previously that I believe the explanation of this condition arises from the fact that we force the taste of young people and feed them at first on things they can not assimilate. We give them literary indigestion, and they revolt from reading.

There is scarcely a day of his life until he finishes high school that a boy might not devote at least a short time to reading from which he could derive both pleasure and profit. If you want to learn to read, select first the things that are most interesting to you—history, science, poetry, fiction, the news of the day, or whatever it may be. Read the best things that you can understand and enjoy. You will find that scientific facts as presented by Darwin and Huxley and John Burroughs are not only quite as dependable as those which commonplace writers give you, but they are so simply and so interestingly presented that they read like a story book; they will develop your scientific interest far more quickly than if you give your time to some other author who knows less and writes worse. If you enjoy history, then read Macaulay or John Fiske, or Motley or any one of a dozen men who will give you all the facts that a less brilliant author might present, and who will do it in a style that is at once delightful and inspiring. If you are drawn to the fiction of heroism and adventure you will not know what delight there is in romance at its best until you have tasted

the incomparable Dumas who will lead you through one volume and another with a fascination that is impossible to resist. The boy who once gets into the *Three Musketeers* and who lays it down before it is finished, has a self-control which is beyond my understanding.

If you find it not easy to cultivate the reading habit from lack of interest or for apparent lack of time, you will be tempted to it rather subtly by having a book near by, so that when you drop into an easy chair, or stretch yourself on a couch, for a little rest or to wait until dinner is ready, it will catch your eye or fall easily into your hand. If the book is your own, and especially if you have been led through curiosity or passing fancy to pay for it with your own money, the temptation will be all the stronger for you to see what is in it; and, if you have any persistence, having once begun it, you will be sure to stay with it until you have finished it. The reading of one book almost invariably leads to the reading of another, and so gradually the habit fastens itself upon you.

The difficulty which most men have in college or later in life in accomplishing as much reading as is set for them to do, is due to their not having cultivated the habit of reading rapidly. The ability to read rapidly comes from experience; if you have read little you are quite likely to read slowly. Reading is very largely a mechanical process acquired through daily practice like playing the piano or operating a typewriter. If

it takes you all the evening to get through a few pages, it is quite certain that you have not cultivated very fully the reading habit. Here, again, the value of beginning while young and while you have leisure to cultivate the habit of reading rapidly and reading widely is apparent.

The wider the range of your reading, the more enjoyment you will get out of it, and the greater will be the development of your knowledge, your sympathies, and your imagination. Everyone should read the daily newspapers in order that he may have an intelligent knowledge of the world and its progress at home and abroad. No intelligent boy can now afford to be ignorant of the progress of events in all lands. The world is, after all, a pretty small place, and it is not very hard, if one tries, to know something about a good deal of it. If you read the newspaper as you should, you will read it pretty thoroughly from the feature news on the first page through the editorials to the market reports on the last page. The cartoons, the jokes, and the sporting page will, of course, interest you most, but you can easily cultivate an interest in other things.

You should keep up with the literature of the profession or business in which you are engaged or in which you expect to engage. It is not enough, however, if you are interested in farming to be satisfied with reading an agricultural journal and the local weekly paper. I know a good many farmers who get no further in their reading

than the perusal once a week of a stock journal. These are not very progressive men, however. The newspapers and the technical journals are for information largely. You should read something regularly for inspiration, for kindling your imagination, and for developing your ideals. Read poetry. The better magazines are full of pleasant and inspiring verse, and there is always, to fall back upon, the good old standbys which you have studied and are studying in high school. You will never be sorry if you form the habit early of committing to memory such lines or stanzas or whole poems as especially please you. All through your life these lines will come back to you to be a source of pleasure and a stimulation to happy memories. Middle life and old age seem to you now very remote possibilities, but they will be on you, especially if you lead a busy life, almost before you know it. You will always be glad if while your mind is plastic and easily impressed, you let it dwell upon things that are pleasing and beautiful, and if at will you can recall passages from the best things that have been written.

Nearly everyone reads fiction of some sort, of course—adventure, romance, mystery, character study, philosophy—there are many things treated in the modern novel or short story, and every day, almost, there seems to be a new magazine springing up filled with fiction and feature stories and attracting the eye with its bizarre and parti-colored cover. Most of these are rather trashy,—a good deal of the fiction of today is hardly worth the time

it takes to read it. The magazines which our fathers read and which have stood the test for fifty years or more, are still the best, and one of these, at least, you ought to read regularly. A magazine usually announces both the quality and the character of its contents by the refinement and taste of the design on its cover. The quiet ones are the most conservative and the most worth while.

You will have to read some books of the present day; you would be thought ignorant and behind the times otherwise. People will continue to talk about last month's "best sellers," and though very often there is little reason why these books should sell so well, you will miss something if you are unacquainted with them. Your greatest pleasure in reading, however, will be in the books that have stood the test of time—in Scott, and Cooper and Dickens, and Eliot and Thackeray and Hawthorne and Stevenson, of whose infinite variety you can not tire. If you have not already made their acquaintance, you should begin at once. If you have not before this read the most that they have written, you have to look forward to one of the great pleasures of your life.

Since I began the writing of this paper I have been reading aloud Dickens' *David Copperfield*. I read it first when I was ten with the greatest pleasure and interest; I have read it since a half dozen times, I have no doubt, and yet I think the fact of any former readings adds rather than detracts from the pleasure which I get from it today. As long as I live it will give me joy to go through its chapters.

Sometimes I hear boys say "I don't like Stevenson," or "I don't like Dickens." In such cases, however, I usually find that they have read very little of these authors—one book perhaps—and have based their judgment upon that one volume. Don't be discouraged if you are not pleased the first time you dip into an author; try something else. No two books are more unlike than *The Tale of Two Cities* and *Great Expectations* and any one who has read only *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* might not suspect that Stevenson wrote a book like *Treasure Island* or *The Wrong Box*. An author, like any other normal human being, has different interests and different moods, and we can not honestly judge him until we have seen him under different conditions.

If from your high school course you get nothing else than the ability to read intelligently, an appreciation of books, and a liking for their companionship, the years in school will not have been spent in vain. If you come away from your high school training with a dislike for study, and with little or no interest in books, and no joy in the anticipation of reading you have missed much of what you should have gained.

## SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

The social activities of the young almost always seem excessive to the middle-aged. There are few things we forget so easily as the escapades of youth. A middle-aged father was advising his young son against the evils of dancing.

"But you danced, father, when you were a boy," the son protested.

"True," the father replied, "but I have seen the folly of it."

"Well," the boy replied, "I want to see the folly of it, too."

It is a very normal desire for a young boy to want to have regular and pleasant association with other young people both girls and boys, and in what I say in this paper I do not overlook this fact. It is a desire the gratification of which may very easily be carried to excess; it is a desire which parents, especially fathers, are wont to forget that they ever themselves felt. I have never had a son, I am sorry to say, to whom I could tell how hard I worked when a boy, how little money I spent, how seldom I stayed out at night or went to social parties, but I have listened to other fathers discoursing thus virtuously to their sons, so I know that they had forgotten their youth as I might have done had I but had a chance. Social customs change.



We should not expect our children to enjoy themselves quite as we did at their age. The pleasures in which I indulged as a boy are very different from those in which my young nephews take delight, though I can not see that mine were either saner or more restrained than theirs, and I try to remember this fact when I am tempted to criticise the social life of the young people of today. I should hardly be excusable, however, if I did not try to give them the benefit of my experience.

Men, young and old, are social animals. All of us like to join things. It is as difficult for me to refuse an invitation to become a member of a club or a fraternity or an organization as it is to resist the seductive talk of a book agent when he spreads his attractive wares before my eyes. I feel like a hero if I can summon the courage to turn him down. We joined church or the Democratic party, I have no doubt, not so much from any strong religious or political convictions as from the fact that we were asked; we found it difficult to resist a chance to join, and we yielded. I am not arguing, however, that there is always profit in joining. Boys feel very much about joining things as men do. When they go into a high school fraternity, they are but imitating their fathers or their older brothers in college each of whom, no doubt, has his club or his fraternity. Yet, on the whole, I am convinced that membership in a high school fraternity is not a good thing.

Such an organization might be beneficial if it were based upon more strictly democratic principles than it often is.

Boys are chosen usually for membership not so much because of similarity of tastes and similarity of character as from similarity of their fathers' income and social or business position. Even in the country town in which I live, I could without much chance of error pick out the boys who, when they leave the graded schools, will be asked to join one or another of the high school fraternities existing in the local high school, and I could do it without knowing the boys personally at all, but simply from my knowledge of their parents and from my acquaintance with their financial rating. A boy in moderate or meager circumstances very seldom gets into such an organization, unless perchance he be an athlete, who is likely to be taken because he is a hero. The poor boy can not afford to belong; the boy without social prestige would queer the others.

The high school fraternity, excepting in private academies and boarding schools, exists not so much to bring boys together and to strengthen the friendly relations existing between them as to develop a rather excessive social life in which girls are also to a large degree involved. In a private or boarding school the conditions of living are different and the necessity for banding together more justifiable. Such boys are away from home, and they miss their customary social life, and whatever helps to make for them some of the associations and comforts of home is good. A boys' fraternity in a private academy, is, in a large degree, like a college fraternity and usu-

ally is free from the objectionable features which characterize such an organization in a city high school. It is largely to make boys acquainted with each other, and not so much to bring the members into closer and more frequent association with girls. It makes for healthy friendship.

The high school fraternity is too frequently little more than a dancing club. Its meetings are taken up largely with discussions of the girl friends of the members, in making arrangements for the next dance, or in trying to determine how best to meet the expenses of the last one. If it gave boys definite work to do, if it developed in them qualities of leadership, or helped them the better to assume responsibility while giving them social training, I should not so much object, but as I have seen the members of such an organization after they are out of high school and in college, I can not see that it often does any of these things for them.

My observation of the high school fraternity man after he has entered college is that he is usually a very indifferent student with little scholastic ambition. His ambitions are mainly social. He makes a poor fraternity man in college, because he has not realized in his high school fraternity any of the fundamental principles of adult fraternity life. Fraternity officers all over the country are agreed upon this point, and have passed a resolution that after 1920 no high school fraternity man will be eligible for membership in a college Greek letter fra-

ternity. The reason for this action is that the high school fraternity man is selfish, undemocratic, hard to control, and unwilling to assume responsibility.

The expense of membership in such an organization, even for people in good circumstances, is not to be overlooked. The high school fraternity member considers himself quite grown up, and is not content in his social activities to be considered other than a man with all the accessories that accompany adult, manly, social life. Taxis and candy and flowers and evening clothes all form a part of his social functions; dinner dances and all night sessions are not unusual. The high school boy attempts to imitate all the social excesses and extravagances of his older friends and acquaintances. Sometimes there are even rumors of drinking and gambling and immorality, exaggerated perhaps, but having, no doubt, some small foundation in fact.

Only last year I called to my office two freshmen in college who were developing a reputation for idleness and intemperance. They came from conservative, religious, and well-to-do families, so that I could scarcely believe the tales concerning them which were floating about the campus. They admitted, however, that they were drinking, but of this fact their parents had no suspicion, they said.

"When did you begin?" I asked.

"When we were sophomores in high school," was the reply. "The fellows in our fraternity all thought it was smart to drink."

It is the secrecy of the fraternity no doubt, that encourages such escapades. It is one of the privileges of club life, the boy thinks, to be able unmolested to attempt risqué things, and being alone in his deliberations and free from the guiding hand or the warning voice of older men, he slips easily into temptation.

The high school fraternity is in little or no sense a real brotherhood. Its purpose is not to bring boys together for mutual self-help. It seldom inculcates high moral ideals or develops interest in good scholarship even if it does not actually discourage these things. The members are not selected because they show fitness for doing well the work of high school, but rather because they dress well, dance well, are popular with the girls, and are able to spend money freely upon social pleasure. The high school fraternity seldom if ever has for its purpose the improving of general social conditions in the school or the desire to be an aid to the school authorities in the intelligent and satisfactory control of school affairs. On the contrary it often pulls down scholastic standards, it is a hindrance rather than a help in school management, and it contributes to the pleasure of only a very limited and select number of students. Healthy social activity in the high school should be general, democratic, an activity into which every respectable and well-mannered member of the school may enter, and not limited to a few people who are possessed of money.

I have seldom known a high school fraternity which

did not stir up trouble. The exclusiveness of it arouses envy in the minds of those who are not invited to join. It develops cliques and factions, and breaks down rather than strengthens high school spirit. It often makes a boy arrogant and something of a cad. For all these reasons I believe the high school fraternity is in a majority of cases not the healthiest and best medium for the social activities of the high school boy. It develops social selfishness, its members are likely to overestimate their own social importance, it encourages extravagance in money matters and a contempt for others who are outside of this social aristocracy. If I had a boy I should be sorry if he became a member of such an organization.

A few evenings ago I attended a dance to which one of these high school fraternity boys had been invited. He came in his own car and brought with him his "steady girl." He was dressed with extreme care in a decidedly extreme style. She was fifteen perhaps, and he a year older. She showed all the toilet artifices, all the shades of coloration, of the beauty parlor. They danced together continuously throughout the evening, they exhibited the most extreme contortions and gyrations of the "shimmy" they omitted the usual courtesy of speaking to the chaperones, and held themselves entirely aloof throughout the evening from contact with their conservative companions. They admitted by their actions that they were the social elect, the aristocracy who could not bring themselves to the vulgar level of the crowd.

I should not, perhaps, blame the boy's lack of good manners and good taste upon his fraternity any more than I should hold it responsible for his failure to pass his high school course in English, but the fraternity, when it took him in, knew what he was, that he had neither moral nor intellectual ideals, that he had no conception of good manners, though his father, it is true, is a prominent professional man. It was this last fact that weighed most heavily in the balance when the boy was being considered for membership. My quarrel with the fraternity lies in the fact that having taken him in it has done nothing to improve him, but on the contrary has rather encouraged him in his extreme habits. It is not giving him the sort of social training that a boy should get in high school.

We can never quite get away from the fact in the discussion of a high school boy's social activities that most high schools are coeducational. In considering boys, we can not ignore the fact that girls, too, come in for a large share of consideration. It is a good thing for a young boy to have a healthy conventional association with girls. It helps him morally and socially. I think that a boy can have no stronger moral influence than the companionship of a high-principled, well-balanced girl. The boy, however, who limits his associations to girls, or especially to one girl, or who gives a considerable part of his leisure time to such an association is weakened by it. He becomes soft and mushy; he moons around

sentimentally taking little pleasure, usually, in the vigorous physical sports which go far to make a man. He develops feminine rather than masculine traits. Highly as I regard the benefits which come to a young fellow from his regular relationships with the right sort of girls, I have no hesitancy in saying that the strong, aggressive, manly qualities which we all want to see in a developing boy come from his regular contact and association with those of his own sex. Constant and uninterrupted association with girls induces fastidiousness and over-refinement in a boy. It takes the fight out of him, it tends toward laziness and lassitude. Such a boy drops easily into a rocking chair or a porch swing. He learns usually to play some stringed instrument like the ukelele or the mandolin, and he talks sentimental nonsense.

The young boy with the steady girl is the worst of all. Whenever a boy begins to sing with feeling:

Only *one* girl in this world for me,  
Only *one* girl has my sympathy,

his high school work is likely to go glimmering. It is not always helpful to have a half dozen to divide his attention during his leisure hours; it is positively hopeless if he can see only one on the horizon. The high school boy who devotes his social attentions exclusively to one girl gets little social training or experience. He does not learn to adapt himself to different tempera-



ments, he is likely to become lax in his manners and to ignore social conventions. He comes to know the girl so well that he often does not take the trouble to be scrupulously polite to her. There is likely to develop a dangerous familiarity which breaks down the respect and the courtesy which every boy ought to show to the girls of his acquaintance and to women generally. "Spoon-ing" is ruinous to a boy, morally and socially.

Such a boy I see every day. He is in reality girl crazy. Every morning he walks down the street to meet her and to carry her books to school. Twice a day they walk back and forth together, each quite oblivious of any presence but the other. They hang on each other. Every evening, if the weather permits, they go strolling until long past the proper hour for children to be in bed. Late at night I often recognize his sentimental whistle as he goes back home after being with her during the evening. He is failing in his studies; he could be expected to do nothing else, for he sees nothing, thinks of nothing, dreams of no one but the girl; and he treats her and speaks of her with a suggestion of ownership that is disgusting. In this relation as in many others, there is safety in numbers, for if there were a half dozen he would waste far less time and energy than in the present instance, and he would learn more that is useful and helpful in social matters.

There is the boy in high school also who goes to the opposite extreme—who "can't see a girl at all."

He is speechless when in the presence of the girls, he blushes crimson if one addresses a remark to him, he has no interest in social activities, and no finesse in social conventionalities. When he comes into a room he is all hands and legs; the furniture seems to become animate and to take delight in getting into his way so that he may the more easily stumble over it. It agonizes him to enter a room where there are girls, it is utterly impossible for him unassisted to get out of one. He can never think of anything to say.

Such a boy would be benefited immeasurably if he forced himself a little more into social activities, if he studied to some extent how to carry on a conversation, how to please people, how to come and go without awkwardness and embarrassment. Nothing causes self-consciousness more than a lack of acquaintance with social usage and social forms, and nothing acquaints one with these details more quickly than a little practice and experience. No boy is so awkward or so crude or so shy that he can not learn with a little training to overcome these traits and to enjoy his social relations with other young people. As soon as he overcomes his first embarrassment he will be surprised at his former point of view.

There is a real value to the growing boy in social activities, in learning to meet men as well as women, and older men and women as well as those who are of their own age; boys can learn how, and it should be considered

a necessary part of their education that they do so. I was settling down after dinner, not long ago, to a quiet evening of reading before the grate fire when the telephone rang. I answered the call.

"It's Billy Charters," I explained, as I came back with a rather downcast air. "He has just come to town, and he wants to come over and call this evening. It's a trial, I know, but I couldn't in decency say less than that we'd be glad to see him."

We had known Billy's uncle a number of years ago, and had met his mother once on a visit to Boston; there was no mistaking our duty, and we braced up for a dull evening. The prospect seemed all the more dull in view of the memory of Barker's call on the previous Sunday afternoon. Barker is a neighbor's boy who had arrived just after dinner—we have dinner at one on Sundays—and we wore ourselves to a thin edge in an attempt to introduce topics of conversation that would arouse even a remote interest and enthusiasm on his part. He could not be made to talk, so we lapsed into silence and filled up the time by playing band pieces on the victrola. Other callers came and went, but he hung on.

He was eager to go, but he did not know how. Finally he arose and expressed an intention of bringing his call to a close. Everyone stood—and continued to stand twenty minutes—watching Barker trying to get out. It was only by my moving him gradually toward the front door and all but pushing him into the street that he ultimately got

away; and yet Barker was having as unpleasant a time as we were. He had had no social experience.

I heard Billy's step on the walk at a quarter of eight, and I laid down my book with a regretful sigh to usher him in. He proved to be a healthy, cheerful fellow of eighteen who settled down in one of our arm-chairs with a comfortable, easy air that relieved the situation at once. He asked for the people whom he had met when he had visited in our town as a child. He brought us cheerful messages from his uncle's family, and he related a few hilarious tales of his experiences in learning to fly. He seemed interested in all that we had to say, and followed up every conversational lead with a few ideas of his own. If the talk ever gave signs of lagging, he was ready with a question or a remark. He was in no sense fresh; he was simply alert and ready to do his share of the social drudgery. He showed that he had made the most of his social experiences. He rose at a quarter past eight.

"I knew it was a shame to disturb you on an evening like this," he said, "when you'd no doubt far rather read than be bored by me, but it will please mother to know that I've called, and you've given me an awfully pleasant half hour. May I come again?" He shook hands, and in a moment we heard his quick footsteps going down the walk.

"What a nice boy Billy Charters is," my wife said to me as we were going up stairs after a pleasant two hours of reading. "I believe we ought to ask him to dinner next Sunday."

"That's just what I was thinking," I replied. And yet all the difference between Billy and Barker was that Billy had learned by observation and experience and Barker had not.

Too much of the social energy of the high school boy at the present time, especially in his relations with girls, is expended in dancing. There is scarcely an organization of young fellows, no matter what its primary purpose seems to have been, whether athletic, philanthropic, religious or educational, which does not, when it comes to any expression of social life, think first of giving a dance. It seems, barring the practice of strolling aimlessly about the streets, the only way a boy can conceive of to give a girl a good time. He could play tennis with her, if he only thought so, and, even if her serve is not so good as his, it might improve from practice and under his careful teaching. He could develop her interest and her skill at golf and by so doing contribute to her pleasure and her physical health. He could take her for a walk into the country, he could teach her to row a boat or to drive a car, or perhaps some time she might teach him one of these things. He may object to some of these pastimes on the ground that they are too strenuous and tiring, but I am sure it can easily be shown that to drag oneself over a none too smooth floor for four hours or so, in an atmosphere that is often close and stuffy and full of dust is quite as tiring and much less stimulating than is an equal amount of exercise in the open air. In the open air, moreover, in the

cultivation of those sports to which I have referred, there is a chance for far more friendliness and far less familiarity than in dancing. There is, too, the opportunity for the development of courtesy and thoughtfulness, for the cultivation of little polite attentions which are good for a boy to know and to practice.

Before he gets through the high school a boy should have learned a good many things about conventional social customs, and should have gained a certain respect for them. In themselves these customs may mean very little, but observance of them marks us as experienced and thoughtful, and failure to observe them generally indicates that we are crude and careless. It is a little thing to call after one has been invited to dinner, to rise when a lady comes into the room, to speak to the hostess or the chaperones at a party, to take your hat off when you talk to a woman on the street, or to eliminate "say" and "listen" when beginning a conversation, but these are the little things which prove either that one has kept his eyes open and has seen how really careful, experienced people act, or that one has gone about with those whose social activities have been pretty limited.

If there were no other reason for a boy's not confining his attentions to but one girl the reason I have suggested above would be sufficient. Social activities are for training as well as for pleasure. Through his associations with other young people a boy comes to know how to adapt himself to varying conditions and varying temperaments.

He learns how easily to meet different sorts of people and ultimately to enjoy different sorts. The man who travels from one state to another or from one county to another comes in time to have a broader view of things. He gains in experience at each new stopping place, he finds new pleasures and new interests wherever he goes, and more than this he develops new powers of enjoyment. The man who knows but one city or who has lived in a country town all his life does not know what his powers of enjoyment are until he has given himself a chance to see what other places there are to give him pleasure. So every young boy in the developing of friendly relationships between his boy and girl associates should give himself as diversified an acquaintance as possible. The more people he knows the better; the more girls he knows the safer for him. It is only through experience and the testing of ourselves that we really come to know the sort of people the association with whom will give us most help and most happiness.

I have seen a good many young fellows who in high school settled their girl friendships for life. It is usually a mistake. Boys are too inexperienced and too immature at that age to determine what will satisfy them later in life. High school friendships are healthy and stimulating; high school engagements are more often than otherwise a handicap to intellectual and business progress. The high school boy who comes to college engaged to be married seldom does well in college, and is unlikely to get out of col-

lege life as much as he should. He is like the college boy who always goes home at week ends; his interests are divided, his heart is in two places, and he does justice to neither.

In his eagerness for a good time the boy, like his older brother at times, is rather careless in his choice of his girl associates. He chooses the girl who is a "good fellow," who is not too prudish and exacting in her insistence upon conventionalities, who is ready for any sort of lark, and who, while she is not in any sense of disreputable character, is at least careless and thoughtless and "easy" to get on with. She does not hold him to his best behavior or criticise him when he is careless in his talk or familiar in his manner. It is doubtful if such a relationship, and there are far too many of them, results in any more enjoyment to either of the persons concerned. It is quite certain that such a girl always loses the respect of the boy who takes advantage of her weakness and carelessness, neither derives any helpful social training from the relationship, and one of them at least loses something of idealism and cleanness of character.

I watched a cheap show unload at the railway station the other day. It had come to town for a nine-days run in the open air. There were following it all sorts of careless and disreputable women. The disheartening thing about it all was the rapidity with which these women picked up the young boys standing about. Most of these young fellows had no evil intentions, but the daring



and the adventure appealed to them. They thought it was good fun; it was something to joke about later. I wish I could make it clear that nothing stains a boy's character and lowers his ideals, nothing leaves so permanent a vulgar impression upon his mind as associating with women whose character is low. It leaves the stain that will not come off.

A boy who wants to get the greatest good and the greatest permanent satisfaction and happiness out of life will keep his social relationships on the highest possible plane. The girl who keeps him at a distance, who holds him to his best manners and his best behavior is giving him the best training and in reality the best time.

## MANNERS AND MORALS

I was looking through the book shelves the other day in search of a misplaced book which I was wanting, when I came upon a pretentious volume that took me back almost to the beginning of time for me. *Gaskell's Compendium of Forms* it was called, and a perusal of it was guaranteed to prepare one thoroughly for every line of endeavor, and for every emergency of life. The author was equally at home in science and in literature, in religion and in art, and in all the finesse of social etiquette and poetic expression.

I was fifteen when I bought it, filled with the first impulses to attain a distinct social success in the rural community in which I lived, and yet modest enough to admit that there were many of the graces of society which I had not yet acquired, and many of the exactions of good manners with which I was not familiar. A smooth-tongued college student, trying to earn enough money during the summer to keep him going through the winter, sold it to me, and guaranteed it to give satisfaction or the money would be refunded. The price was \$5.50 in exquisite silk cloth and \$7.00 in full morocco.

The book contained everything from how to grow beets to the ten commandments; it gave explicit information on the widest variety of topics from how to open a set of ac-

counts to the proper method of approaching a young woman with an offer of marriage. I can not say that it ever got me very far, however, in any of the arts which it professed to teach except, perhaps, to impress me more strongly with my ignorance, to convince me of how little of manners and morals may be learned from books, and yet to cause me to see how necessary it is that we have some knowledge of these things and practice them early in life. The ill-mannered, crude boy in high school seldom, in my experience, develops into the gracious, easy mannered man. The high school age is the habit-forming age; it is the age when principles of action are developed, and when moral and social ideals are set up. For these things the school and the home have pretty heavy responsibilities resting upon them, and these things are not likely to be learned from books.

We are tremendously practical these days. Our idea of education is that it consists mostly of facts and general information concerning mathematics and literature and science and language. We must know the immediate and practical purpose of these facts, too, if we consent to assimilate them. The average boy who follows a curriculum in high school or who studies any particular subject wants to be shown where he will profit by it. Unless he can see that he can cash in on his work before he has gone far, his enthusiasm wanes. The doing of a thing for its own sake makes no appeal to him; there must be a definite and specific financial consideration assured him.

There are few things, excepting good morals, which are of more real value to a boy than good taste and good manners; they are among the things that pay. Both the principles and the practice should be learned in school, for principles here are of little value unless they can be carried into practice every day on the street, in the home, and in the classroom. I asked a well-known engineer in New Haven once what advice he would give to a young technical man who was hunting a job.

"Tell him," was the answer, "to choose his neckties thoughtfully and to be careful of his manners."

I asked another prominent man of affairs not long ago what special criticism he made of the young fellows who came to him for employment.

"Their English is poor, and their laundry bills too small," was his reply.

Good manners will accomplish a great deal for a boy when other things fail. As an executive officer, I am charged with the responsibility of giving or denying special privileges to students in the institution to which I belong. I try to be as consistent and unprejudiced as any one with human instincts and emotions can be, and yet I am sure I am often uneven in my decisions; I am often "worked," as boys say.

Carter came in at Thanksgiving time to ask for an extension of leave. He is a freshman and had not been home since September. His case was fair, but he presented it badly. When I hesitated, he grew irritated and as-

sumed a rather arrogant and impudent manner. If I did not let him go it was a "rotten shame," and not in any sense giving him a "square deal," he asserted. There was nothing to do but to refuse his request if I were to keep my self-respect, and he flushed hot and banged the door furiously as he went out.

Then Hughes came in, smiling and gracious and frank.

"We boys are a terrible bother to you, aren't we?" he began.

"Not always," I said. "What would you like?"

"It's nervy in me to ask, I know," he went on, "but I don't want to come back until Tuesday morning after Thanksgiving. I haven't much of an excuse you'll think, but there's a party Monday night, and there's a girl at home I know, and—and I'd like to take her to the party." He looked up blushing.

Well, there was a girl once I knew—there is yet in fact—whom I liked tremendously well to take to a party.

"That'll be all right, Hughes," I said; "give her my love."

Now, when I thought it over at night, I wasn't quite sure that I'd been fair to Carter. He had as good a case as Hughes; he had simply put it unfortunately. He didn't have good manners, and I had refused him only because he was not quite polite. I have an idea that many people do the same sort of thing for a similar reason.

Good manners must be genuine to make a permanent

impression, must be based upon a real desire to give pleasure and comfort to others. When people first met McKee they thought him the most charming boy imaginable. He was always on his feet when a lady came into the room; he never talked to a girl without taking off his hat, as any polite boy would do; he showed all the externals of respect for his teachers and for his elders. He was as punctilious in standing at attention and saying "sir" as a boy just out of military school. He was quiet, attentive, and thoughtful. But when one came to know him better one realized that he was tricky, deceitful, given to profane and vulgar talk. His apparent politeness was only a subterfuge for the accomplishment of his selfish purposes. When those who had to associate with him found out his real character, his false politeness became an insult and a lie.

A boy is, of course, supposed to learn good manners at home, but as often as not he fails. He is not judged at home with an impartial eye; his little slips are overlooked or condoned. If he is the youngest or the only child or the child of well-to-do parents, he is usually spoiled and made selfish, and as I have just said, the selfish boy is seldom polite. Sometimes he comes from a home where the courtesies of life are little known or still less practiced, and where there is little for him to learn. In more cases than otherwise it falls back upon the schools and especially upon the high school and the academy to inculcate in him the principles of good manners. It

is upon his teacher that he must rely both for principles and for illustration of their practice.

There was a letter in my morning mail a few days ago from Porter that brought me pleasure and surprise. Most of my letters from undergraduates begin: "You will no doubt be surprised to hear from me, but the fact is I want something," but Porter wanted nothing. He is only seventeen. His father is a working man; his mother is without education and is busy from dawn to dark with the household cares incident to a large family. The boy has had no social experience; and one could not reasonably expect much social finesse in him. The note which he had written me was carefully written, in unquestionably good form. It was frank and boyish but phrased in as thoroughly good taste as might have been shown by a trained social secretary.

I had done the boy a trifling kindness when he was ill in the hospital—an attention which a thousand boys had received from my hands—or yours perhaps—before and had passed by unnoticed and unacknowledged. His note was to express his appreciation of my courtesy and to thank me for it. It had pleased both him and his parents, he said, to have me come and see him, and the book I had loaned him he had thoroughly enjoyed. His thoughtfulness touched me; it made me happy all day long, and it left a pleasant memory which will not soon fade. I knew where he received his inspiration. It was from some teacher in the high school—sensible,

sympathetic—who had given him the idea and left the impression in his mind.

In contrast to this was another experience I had only a little while ago. A young fellow came to see me who had been dismissed from one institution and who wished to enter another. He was the son of a well-to-do man; he had been brought up under good social conditions; he might very reasonably have been expected to have an acquaintance with good social form. I listened to his story, and I saw that his situation was a most difficult one and one that very much required that he have a friend at court to make a strong plea for him. I had never seen him before, but I undertook to help him. I wrote a letter to a college officer in another institution, a man with whom I had an intimate acquaintance, and I gave it to the boy. I learned afterwards that it accomplished the purpose for which it was written and secured for the young fellow admission to the other institution. I have no recollection that he thanked me when I gave him the letter, and I know that he has not done so since. I have never had a word from him, and some way I can't help but wonder who taught him English composition in high school, who is responsible for his manners.

A friend of mine not long ago invited to dinner a half dozen boys just out of high school and away from home for the first time. The invitation was given in all kindness. She hoped to give pleasure to young fellows whom she imagined to be homesick, and it was at no little



trouble and self-sacrifice that she prepared the meal. Two of the boys did not reply at all to her note, the other four accepted her invitation, but only two showed up at the dinner. Not one has called on her or in any way acknowledged her courtesy since, and yet they had all come from excellent high schools and some of them had been brought up in families who admitted they were above the middle classes. It was annoying to the hostess, but, of course, the person who really suffered the most was the boy himself whose training had been so inadequate.

Every autumn I watch the long line of freshmen just out of the academy or the high school as they go through the preliminary steps to enter college. The registrar's office is just across the hall from my own. Half the boys do business with their hats on, though most of the registrar's clerks are young women, and other attractive young women are standing about them—standing sometimes even when the young men are sitting. Taking the hat off is, of course, only a convention meaningless in itself, but it has come to suggest respect for women, respect for authority, respect for the house that shelters us, and no gentleman can afford to ignore it. I see these same boys later smoking at parties or as they walk down the street with young women, unconscious of the fact that by so doing they are proclaiming their lack of good breeding.

There are a thousand courtesies and conventions to be

learned in high school—courtesies to women, respect for authority, the acknowledgment of kindnesses received, attention to the wishes and comforts of others, regard for one's elders, attention to the conventionalities of the society in which we live, the expression of sympathy in sorrow, of joy in success, of congratulation in the accomplishment of what our friends and acquaintances have attempted. Much of this finds expression in the thoughtful words which we may utter when face to face with friends, but more of it will be seen in the note of thanks or congratulation or condolence which requires only a few moments to write and which brings the greater pleasure often because it is unexpected. A brief, frank, well-worded note will often bring more pleasure to the recipient than a costly gift.

But after all you must have something more than mere good manners. Every day, almost, I am called upon to write letters recommending young fellows whom I have known while they were in college. Those who make inquiry always want information in very specific things. Is the man honest, can his word be relied upon, is he a fellow of clean and temperate habits, does he gamble? The men themselves who ask these questions may not be wholly exemplary in their own conduct, but they do not care to employ men who can not furnish a clean record. It is during the years of physical and mental development in the high school that moral principles are formulated and strengthened quite as much as at home.

Sometimes the boy with good manners and rather uncertain morals seems to manage as well as if his principles of conduct were quite above reproach. One of the best-mannered boys I have ever known was of this sort. He was good-tempered, polite, thoughtful of others, clever, a veritable Steerforth, in fact. He never seemed either to say or do the tactless thing, and he was loved by many people and thought charming by more. But one did not know him long until it became evident that he was selfish. He never did a kindness that involved a personal sacrifice. He never gave up or resisted anything that furnished him personal or physical pleasure. The result was inevitable. He made friends only to use them for his own ends; he was honest only when honesty subserved his purpose. He wasted his money, he learned to gamble, to drink, to engage in the most unclean practices simply because he had no real moral principles. He is charming still at forty, but no one trusts him; he picks up a precarious livelihood by the most irregular business methods. He might have been anything he chose if he had been honest and clean.

Sometimes the boy with good morals and without the finesse of good manners grows a trifle discouraged.

"It doesn't pay," he affirms. "It is the smooth guy who gets by."

He finds himself unpopular, ignored, made fun of, and he attributes the result to his rigid principles rather than to his lack of tact, or to his crude manners. A boy with

good principles and good manners is invincible. He has friends, he commands respect, he has two strong and trusty weapons with which to combat temptation and to meet difficulty.

First of all you will have to be honest. The line between what is honest and what is not is not so widely drawn even among men of experience that it is not strange that young boys should often become confused in the matter, and yet the distinction between what is mine and what is thine, between borrowing and theft, between crime and a practical joke ought to be distinguishable.

Few boys would give a burglar a leg into the window of a house which he was about to rob, yet it takes more principle than most boys possess to refuse to give help to a needy friend or even to a passing acquaintance who asks for it in a school examination. If he demurs at all, it is quite as often from the fear of being detected as from any moral principle which actuates him, though one act is as undeniably dishonest as the other. I have put the question to scores of boys, yet I have seen few who did not feel that it was rather a virtue than otherwise to help a man who is in trouble even though the help was simply an aid to dishonesty. I have even known fathers who, while they would have been sorry to have their sons crib, were yet rather proud that these same sons had aided some one else to be dishonest.

There is often a feeling among boys, also, that an examination in school is not a test of their knowledge but a con-

test between teacher and pupil—something similar, in fact, to love or war where anything is fair if it is not found out. They do not realize that when they write their names on an examination, they are virtually saying "The contents of this paper are absolutely mine."

"I must run along," a high school boy calling at my house said to me not many evenings ago. "I have to write a theme for Blanche; she loaned me her algebra problems, and I must pay her back."

His is a common practice, but it is the beginning of a sort of dishonesty which helps to weaken principle and to undermine good scholarship.

A young friend of mine came home from school one evening in spring with a big bunch of roses in his hands.

"Where did you get the flowers, John?" his father inquired.

"Out of Mrs. Perkins' yard," was the reply.

"Did she give them to you?"

"No, Fred and I just took them."

Fred was standing by holding an even larger bunch.

"Go to Mrs. Perkins and give her back the roses," the father said, "and tell her that you didn't realize when you took them that you were actually stealing."

"But, father, I don't know Mrs. Perkins," John protested.

"You'll know her when you have had this talk with her," was the reassuring reply, "and I'm sure you will find it easier next time not to take other people's property."

"I should not have humiliated my son in that way," Fred's father said to John's later when they were talking the matter over.

"Such a trifling humiliation is not to be considered," the other man replied, "if I help to make my son honest."

I was going down town not long ago, and I invited Bill to go with me. We were to take the street car, and it was naturally to be supposed that, since I had extended the invitation to him, I would be responsible for the fare. I ran my hand into my pocket as we started and found a quarter there, so I knew that I could finance the trip easily. We did our errand, and were on the car coming back when I discovered that I still had the twenty-five cents unbroken in my pocket. The conductor on the down trip had evidently passed me up when collecting fares, and it had escaped my notice. As he came up to me now, I handed him the coin, saying "Two fares." He rang up two but gave me twenty cents in change.

"What shall I do?" I asked Bill. "We did not pay our fares going down, and the conductor has just short changed himself a nickel."

"Your're a fool if you give the man the fare for the down town trip, but you should pay him the nickel on which he just now made a mistake."

"Why?" I inquired.

"The dime is the company's loss, and it was their fault they didn't collect it. The conductor will have to make

good on the nickel when he cashes in, if you don't give it to him."

I have put the case up to a hundred boys since that time, and they have all given me the same answer. It is all right, they think, to steal from a corporation, but not quite honest to steal from an individual or profit by his mistake. They fail to see that real honesty will not permit us to steal from anyone.

I have done business for many years with all kinds of boys—the lazy and the shiftless, the selfish and the careless, those who have been thoughtless and those who have been dissipated and immoral. I can get on better with any one else than the liar. Truth is at the foundation of confidence; no business can be done satisfactorily without it; it is one of the cardinal principles of character. There is, of course, too, the half truth that is the worst sort of lie—the words which are themselves not false in their meaning, but which are so uttered as to convey false impression.

Robey, whose allowance was quite adequate, had been very neglectful in the payment of some of his bills. I spoke to him about the matter, and he assured me he would take care of the bills at once. A month later I found that he was still owing on one of the old accounts.

"I have written the check today," he said when I called him the second time. I said nothing more, because to my mind his statement meant that the bill was paid. I was

very much surprised to find six weeks later that nothing had been done about the matter.

"I'm afraid you did not tell me the truth," I said to Robey when he came in response to my call.

"I didn't tell you I'd paid the bill," he said in explanation, "I said I'd written the check. I just didn't send it."

"But you meant me to think you had sent it, didn't you?"

"I suppose so."

And now Robey thinks it a trifle unfair when I hesitate to take his statements of fact without pretty careful analysis.

Sometimes it is hard to tell the truth—especially when it involves some one else or reflects upon your own character or conduct. There is, in my estimation at least, a generally prevalent false sense of honor which makes it wrong to tell the truth when the facts if known would not be creditable to some one else. I have never understood why. It is certainly not so in legal proceeding or in adult life. It demands unusual courage often to tell the truth especially when the consequences might be avoided.

McDonald was waiting for me when I came into the office one morning a short time ago.

"I want to tell you something," he said. "It isn't creditable to me, and possibly you'll think when I'm through that I'm a pretty poor chap; but I want to get it off my mind. I've got to have my own self-respect if I'm to be happy."



Then he told me that when he had presented his credits from high school in the fall, the record had not been correct—he had been given credit for subjects which he had never taken, and, though he recognized the mistake, he had said nothing about it. Now he wanted the matter straightened out, even if he were dismissed from college.

“What are you going to do to me?” he asked when he was through with his story—a story which he had told with much embarrassment.

“We’ll first have your high school record corrected,” I said, “and then we’ll forget all about the rest of the story. Only I want to say that you are a thousand times better and stronger boy for having told the truth.”

I said that many boys find it embarrassing and difficult to tell the truth when the facts to be revealed are discreditable to some one else. I have no reference to trifling derelictions which are often a matter of personal opinion and which do not concern the well-being of the community, but to matters of real moral significance which vitally affect the interests of others. In the former case every sensible person would respect the boy who refused to say anything at all. What I have in mind concerns real immorality.

There had been in our gymnasium considerable stealing of watches and money and clothing of all sorts. I was pretty well convinced who had done it and was trying to confirm my convictions. I was sure that Moore would

be able to help me out if he would tell what he knew, and I called him.

"I couldn't tell you about that," he said, "I've been brought up to believe that it is not honorable to give another fellow away."

"I respect the general principle," I admitted, "but this man is a thief who is living on the community and is robbing boys who will be forced to leave college if the thing continues."

"That doesn't make any difference," Moore replied.

Ultimately the real thief when he was caught (and he did prove to be the acquaintance of Moore whom I had suspected,) accused Moore of the theft, for any thief will lie in order to cover up his own dishonesties, and he is seldom discriminating in choosing the men whom he accuses.

I have known many boys with the false standard of responsibility who held that it was wrong under any circumstances to involve others than themselves in any dereliction and who considered that they were doing a virtuous act when they lied to keep a guilty companion out of trouble. We are forced to change such standards as these when we become adult members of society, for the courts do not allow such a view point, but on the other hand hold that the good citizen is not only responsible for his own conduct but must exercise restraining influence upon his neighbor and inform on him if he is a law breaker.

Every boy is under a moral obligation to work hard, to carry through what he begins whether or not it is agreeable

or interesting, to keep his promises even though the keeping be difficult or disagreeable. At home and in school we have become so accustomed to following the line of least resistance, to choosing for study only such subjects as we find easy or entertaining, to doing only those things which we like, that we balk when it comes to any hard or disagreeable work.

Frank's teacher in astronomy reported that he was not going to class. Since he had signed up for the course and was under obligations to attend it unless released by the Dean, I called him to inquire the cause of his absence.

"I don't care for it," he said. "It's hard, it doesn't interest me and I just quit it. I don't see what good astronomy is going to do me."

He had no sense of obligation to carry through what he had begun, no pride whatsoever in his class record. He was looking for the snap, for something that in itself awakened his interest; he had no conception of the moral and intellectual benefits of hard work.

There is no moral principle which is more fundamental for the high school boy to learn than that which has to do with the clean personal life. If the army taught anything, it taught us that. Every year I give to the freshmen who are just entering my own institution from high school a series of talks on personal hygiene including the dangers and physical effects of drinking and of bad sexual practices. The thing that surprises me always is how little they know and how little of what they know is true. They

have the most distorted ideas of a normal healthy sexual life and of the effects of sexual disease. If they follow immoral or intemperate practices in college, in nine cases out of ten they have begun these practices long before they were ready for college, and have pitifully little conception of the ultimate dangers to character and health involved. A beginning in self-discipline should be made when impulses and imagination first lead a boy into untoward things, and this is at the beginning of high school rather than at the beginning of college. A boy's moral status is pretty well settled when he enters college. Someone should have laid down for him definite principles of personal thinking and personal conduct. Some one should have had the courage and the tact to tell him frankly and straightforwardly of his physical being, of the sacredness of his body and the necessity of his keeping it morally clean. If this is not done in the high school, there is very little likelihood of its being done at home.

A father sat in my office a few days ago talking about his freshman son. He had come in response to a letter from me. The boy was doing no good in college, his habits were bad, he was the victim of disease. I told the father the wretched unpleasant truth as gently as I could, and he seemed surprised, stunned.

"But my boy has always been a good boy," he said. "How has it been possible for college to ruin him so quickly?"

"You are mistaken," I answered. "Every experience

he has had in college he had tried before he came. If you think I am wrong ask him."

I knew I was right, for the boy had told me so, and he had told me also that neither at home nor in the high school had he been given any specific or friendly instruction as to the danger to his mind or to his body of the habits which he began early to form.

"If you want us to live a clean life, to stand for the highest moral principles," one of my freshmen said to me not long ago, "don't wait until we get to college before you set before us the ideals we should follow; begin in high school before we have begun the practices which are sometimes almost impossible to give up."

Every boy comes to the time when his moral principles are tested, when temptation stares him suddenly in the face, when he must prove to himself and to his friends whether these principles are a pretense or a reality. As their foundations were laid early, as they have been held to firmly and honestly they will stand, for the ultimate test of any boy's manners or morals is how successfully he will meet the unexpected social or moral crisis.

## CHOOSING A PROFESSION

I suppose that at one time or another in his life, every boy plans to be a street car conductor or a railroad engineer, or at least to follow some pursuit of an active mechanical nature. Most boys like to see the wheels go round. As for me, I was determined to be a doctor. I imagine I was led to this conclusion through watching Doctor Triplett who visited the sick in our country community in his two wheeled sulky drawn by a rangy spirited gray horse. It seemed to me there would be more pleasure and less hard work in such a vocation than in any other with which I was familiar. I did not take into account the long dreary rides through the bitter cold of winter or the bottomless mud of early spring to visit people who never paid, perhaps. I saw only the pleasant side of it.

As society is run now it is essential that every one have some business or profession by means of which he may eat and be clothed and have some recreation. Excepting that we are healthier and happier as a result of regular work, and that for most of us it is necessary to existence, I imagine that most of us would not concern ourselves as much with work as we now do. I have never believed, and a long experience has not tended to change my opinion, that every young fellow is cut out for so definite and specific a job

that if he does not hit upon this particular position, he is ruined for life. No more do I think that there is in the world somewhere for every man a particular woman, whom he must meet and win or be forever unhappy. Men are for the most part adaptable; they can as often as otherwise fit equally well into various positions or professions, and can find happiness with many sorts of people. A good lawyer might very easily have made an equally successful physician if he had gone into the latter profession with earnestness.

There are in some people, however, peculiar weaknesses which are difficult to strengthen; peculiar talents which fit them for particular work. Some people could be musicians or plumbers and little else. Such people should choose a profession thoughtfully and carefully. The less balanced and normal the brain, the less evenly developed one's powers are, the more one is a genius, the more necessary it is that one should get into the kind of work to which he is particularly adapted, or evade that which he would find impossible. If a boy is intending to study engineering he should have special ability and interest in mathematics; if he is to be a clergyman, he ought to have some leanings toward religion. A prospective surgeon should be adept in the use of his fingers, and anyone proposing to study law should be capable of logical reasoning.

One can not always with certainty decide whether or not he has special fitness in one profession or another. A boy's father assured me not long since that he was

convinced his son would make an excellent lawyer because he was such a ready talker. If the ability to talk readily fitted one for the practice of law, women, some people think, would have a distressing handicap over men. Fluent speech is, of course, often a help to a lawyer if it is accompanied by other talents, but fluent speech which is not induced by logical reasoning and an accurate knowledge of law may as likely as not be a handicap instead of an asset to a man attempting to practice law. Lawyers have been known to lose their cases by not knowing when to stop talking. Again parents frequently assure me that their young sons have unusual fitness for engineering work because, perhaps, they have constructed an electric motor, or made a water wheel, or fixed a refractory lawn mower. Such mechanical ability is often an aid to engineering work, but it is in no way an absolute necessity or a manifestation of engineering genius. It suggests the mechanic rather than the engineer.

So far as it is possible, however, one should find out whatever special fitness he may have for any one work and devote himself to that. Teachers can help in this decision; parents should recognize the talents of their children and try to make the most of them; the boy himself should analyze his own special fitness. I have never been sure as to just how accurately the average man can judge of his own individual ability. A shrewd executive whom I once knew used to say that when a young man confessed to more than ordinary skill in any



one direction or thought himself especially fitted for a particular type of work, it was rather conclusive evidence that he might better take up some other. However that may be, I have seldom in teaching English composition, found that the man who laid claim to any particular skill in writing actually possessed much. Accurate self-judgment is difficult, but too much self-assurance is often an evidence of weakness.

Granted that a boy has unusual mental gifts; a peculiar danger often confronts him—the danger of depending upon his unusual ability to carry him through without work. It is an old saying that the only genius worth much is the genius for hard work. I have known a few geniuses, but I do not now recall more than one or two who got far in the professions which they adopted, because very few of them were willing to work regularly or seriously. Knowing their ability, they grew to depend upon it to carry them through at the last moment without any regular hard labor on their part; not willing to work hard and regularly, they did not increase their power; they were no more able to accomplish results at the end of ten years of practice than at the beginning of their careers.

"Can't I come back next September," a freshman who had failed asked me, "and start all over again as if nothing had happened?"

It was hard for him to see that a year of loafing had had an effect on him which could not be eliminated by

forgetting the past. Powers that are not increased wane; the mind will not stand still in its development.

If you are taking up any work or profession it is wisest to understand beforehand what it involves. Read books on the subject; if you are thinking of engineering or medicine or law, get hold of some successful engineer or doctor or lawyer and ask him about the training necessary to success in his profession and the difficulties incident to it. He will probably advise you to try some other profession. He will enlarge on the difficulties, no doubt, of his own particular calling, but this fact need not serve to discourage you. You will find often that what on the surface seemed easy sailing has been a hazardous voyage full of storms and often suggestive of shipwreck. Men will advise you to keep out of the profession which they are following, because knowing as intimately as they do the hardships of their own calling, and being acquainted only with the externals of others, they imagine their own to be the most difficult and wearing and unsatisfactory of all. Fathers especially are loath to seeing their sons take up the line of work in which they themselves have become established and have succeeded.

"I don't want my son to take up my profession," I hear scores of fathers say. "There is nothing in it but hard work."

So, too, men who have come up to affluence through sacrifice and toil, say, "I never want my son to go through what I have gone through," not realizing that what

they went through gave them the strength and the success which they attained.

There is always the misleading suggestion by these men that in any other profession but their own efficiency and success are attained without labor, and that hard labor is if possible to be avoided, while the truth of the matter is that no one is likely to get far in any sort of business without persistent, steady, hard work. Don't be discouraged because your proposed profession involves hard work.

There is often a considerable advantage to a boy in choosing to carry on the business which his father has followed. His unconscious observation of the details of his father's business gives him a handicap over another man going into the same business wholly without experience. He is likely to know more about his father's business than any other. The counsel and advice which the older man could give the younger should never be disregarded, and the ready opening which the younger man might find in his father's profession or establishment when his education is completed should not be undervalued. The fact that such a man will be prepared for the difficulties and the discouragements of his profession, and will not be surprised or caught unawares by them will contribute somewhat to his success. There is more independence, of course, in starting out alone, and most boys like so far as possible to feel that they are under obligation to no one, and have been the cause

of their own success. It is better, however, to be a good farmer on the old home place than it is to be a second-rate engineer on your own account.

It is usually a mistake to let some one else make the choice for you, even if the person who offers to do so or who insists upon doing so is your father or mother. I know parents who select the professions for their children and map out in minute detail the line of education each one is to follow, and who have everything all settled, perhaps, even before the child is born. It is a process which more often than otherwise results in a lack of enthusiasm if not in failure on the part of the child. I can at this time recall only one young fellow whose father, contrary to the boy's own desires, picked out a profession for his son, who ever accomplished much that was worth while in the work he undertook. It is about as safe to allow some one else to select for you the girl you are to marry as it is to let him, without regard to your interests and desires, pick out for you your life work. The choice ought to be your own.

Chilton, stumbling through his sophomore year in college, had been making a sad failure; he showed no enthusiasm, no interest, no energy in the work for which he was registered.

"Why are you taking engineering?" I asked. "You don't like mathematics, and mechanics is a closed book to you."

"Well, I never wanted to do it," he replied. "I really

wanted to go into business, but father insisted on my studying engineering because he thought it offered the best opportunities to a young fellow of anything going, and because Uncle John is in a position to give me a job and a good start when I have graduated."

Chilton will never make an engineer no matter how hard his father sets his jaw and no matter how good a job his Uncle John has waiting for him, because he hasn't a mathematical brain, he doesn't like engineering, and he has not learned to do anything well which he doesn't like.

This leads me to say that there is probably no more foolish practice than to choose a business or a profession purely because in itself it seems to offer peculiar opportunities or attractions. All through the summer following their graduation from high school, boys come to see me or write to me concerning their entrance to college.

"What do you think is a good course for a fellow to take up?" they ask me, with the idea in mind that there must be some work par excellence in itself, regardless of the individual or of his attitude toward his work. They do not see that it is the man and not the profession that brings about success. They argue that because electricity is the coming motive power, electrical engineering is really the only course to pursue if they are going to college, or possibly that because chemistry has played such a wonderful part in the war and will play an even more wonderful part in the reconstruction which follows the war, chemistry is an unusually good field for a boy to enter. They are, no

doubt, correct in supposing that chemistry and electricity will be more generally than ever put to practical use in the coming years, but no course is in itself a good course, and no line of work offers special opportunities unless the men who pursue them show special fitness.

There was a letter in my mail only a few days ago from a young fellow just graduated from high school, who, without money, was considering the possibility of going to college.

"I should like to know," he wrote, "just what special inducements your University will offer me in the way of a chance to earn my living. I want to go to college, and I am intending to choose the college which will make me the most attractive offer and the course which suggests the greatest future." He mentioned no special fitness, no talents or training or experience which should give him preference or precedence over other boys.

I replied that he was looking at the matter from the wrong angle. The college welcomes the boy who has most ability, who can do something better than common, who has special fitness for a definite job, and such a boy can get a job almost anywhere he goes. It is in such a way as this young fellow was looking at his job in college that some men regard a profession. They are willing to sell themselves to the profession which bids the highest, not realizing that it is their own personal qualities and interest which determine whether or not the job is worth while. I am convinced that many of the failures which young

fellows meet in all lines of business and especially in technical courses in college come largely from the fact that men have gone into them not because of any special fitness or of any special interest in the work or liking for it, but because they felt that the particular business or profession which they were taking up offered an easy and sure approach to success.

In choosing a profession one ought to be willing to reach success slowly and by reasonable stages.

Cowan did well in high school and college. He was not afraid of work, he showed enthusiasm, and he was dependable. His character was above reproach, and his personality was unusually attractive. I used often to marvel at the ease with which he met people, the rapidity with which he made friends, and the facility with which he dispatched business; but yet he did not get on. He tried life insurance but gave it up at the end of a few months; he took up the real estate business; he was a traveling salesman for a tractor company; he went in with a reputable manufacturing concern; but he did not stick long. He drifted from one thing to another, and at the end of ten years he had got nowhere; yet everyone admitted his ability.

The real cause of his failure was that Cowan wanted to succeed at a bound; he was looking for something that would make him rich or famous or independent in a short time. He was not willing to go through the long period of servitude and drudgery that practically every success-

ful or professional or business man has found necessary before he reached the goal of his ambitions. So he rushed from one rainbow end to another in a vain endeavor to find the pot of gold without digging for it.

Two friends of mine, a steady, successful, middle-aged couple, were stopping for a time at a high-priced hotel in the Allegheny mountains.

"Isn't it strange," Mrs. Granger said to her husband, "how few young people there are here. Almost everyone is middle-aged or past it."

"That's easy," her husband responded. "A man has to be forty-five before he has made enough money to afford to come here."

It is a hard lesson for a boy to learn that in any profession or business that is worth while success comes slowly. Persistence is necessary; faithfulness, courage and willingness to wait for results. It is the hardest, after all, for a boy to learn to wait, for him to realize that the profession or business that promises immediate success is frequently, like the skilfully gilded brick, a thing to be wary of.

One should not choose a profession in which he has no special interest and for the work of which he has no liking. A month or two ago a high school senior from a neighboring state brought to me a letter of introduction from a former student of mine with the request that I should give the boy advice as to the choice of his profession. The young fellow seemed normal in every



way. His course in high school had been well balanced and was made up of mathematics, and language, and science varied enough to test his ability. He had done one thing about as well as another. It did seem, however, that he had rather unusual talents in music. The history of his family on both his father's and mother's side showed musical appreciation and technical skill. He was himself a more than ordinarily skilful pianist. It was my friend's opinion that the boy ought to study music and prepare himself to become a professional musician rather than to take scientific or technical work. I talked with him for some time to get his reactions.

"What do you want to do?" I finally asked him.

"I'd rather be a chemical engineer than anything else in the world," was his reply. "I'd be willing to work my head off, if I could get a chance to study chemistry."

His point of view is the only safe guide to the solution of the problem of choosing a profession. Interest, desire, the willingness to work at a thing because one likes it—that is the test which every boy should apply to himself when he is making the choice of the work which he is to take up for life. Every business, every profession is full of men who are working because they have to do so and not because they want to do so, who drag themselves to their tasks with lagging steps and unenthusiastic spirits. The most favored positions in life are full of difficulties. Every position and every profession has its trials and its hard problems that will test the courage and try the temper of

the best of men. Unless one likes his work, unless he can show interest and enthusiasm in it, his lot is a sad one. One should choose for his life work something in which he will find pleasure, he should go to it every morning with delight and should leave it with something like regret. Otherwise there will be for him constant grumbling, unrest and discontent.

It is easy to find illustrations of the fact that interest and enthusiasm will work wonders. Not many years ago a young fellow from a country town in the middle west applied for admission to one of our middle west educational institutions. He had had no high school training, and the admission requirements of the institution were severe. He was past twenty-one years of age, however, so that he was admitted on trial as a special student and allowed to attempt to carry the regular work of the freshman year of the course in which he was interested. It was his greatest pleasure to have a chance to study the subjects which he liked, and he carried that same interest and enthusiasm to all other subjects which he attempted or which he was required to take. During his leisure hours he devoted himself to the high school work which he had missed as a boy, passed it off by examination, and at the end of four years and a half he graduated as an honor student.

No one ever thought that he had a brilliant mind; he had interest and he was willing to work. If such a man as he without adequate preparation, and with

only average brains, could through desire and interest mainly, accomplish such gratifying results, what could a thoroughly well-prepared man not do? And what is true of one sort of work is true of another. It is the man who is working because he enjoys it who throws his whole soul into what he is doing and who can not be excelled or defeated. It is the men who have no enthusiasms, and who can't get down to work, who are always in doubt as to whether or not they have chosen correctly, and who seldom succeed. The young fellow who knows what he wants to do and is willing and eager to do whatever is necessary to accomplish his purposes is a long way toward success. The man who doesn't know his own mind, who is waiting for someone to pick out for him a good job, or to set him up in a successful business, has little chance of getting anywhere.

Men say sometimes that the thing they would like most to do requires so much preparation before they are ready to go on with it, that they can not afford the time or the money required to fit them to begin. They would like to be lawyers or physicians or preachers or architects or whatever it may be, but to be a well-prepared physician requires seven or eight years of study and preparation not to speak of the sum of money to be expended, and they feel that they will be half through life before they are ready to take up its duties. Men excuse themselves for not finishing a college course which they have begun, on the ground that they have found a good open-

ing or have been offered an unusually attractive position and they fear that if they wait to complete their education all the good jobs will be gone. Opportunity knocks but once, they say, and they are convinced that he is now at their door.

Over against these facts, however, are others. No one has ever been heard to regret, no matter what sort of business or profession he is in, that his preparation was too carefully made, that he put in too much time or too much money on his preliminary education, or did too much studying before he began. On the other hand, there are illustrations without number of men who bemoan the fact all their lives that they gave too little time to preparation and that they made their greatest mistake in not finishing their education. Illustrations innumerable can be found, also, of men who even in middle life got into the professions for which a delayed preparation had been made and who have more than made good.

The boy or the young man, therefore, who hesitates about taking up the profession or the business which he likes best because of the time or the money necessary to prepare for it, or the man who rushes into work ill prepared because he is afraid all the good jobs will be gone if he waits, is making a serious mistake. It is far better to take up a profession we like even late in life than it is to drag out a dull existence in doing the things mechanically which fail to bring out our best efforts. It is better to finish one's preparations as thoroughly

as possible and trust to the fact that there are always good jobs for the man who is fitted to hold them.

Fitness, interest, enthusiasm, willingness to work, thorough preparation—these are the vital things to be considered by any young fellow in the choice of a profession.

## GOING TO COLLEGE

I am convinced that far too many boys go to college. It is not that I undervalue the worth of a college education—far from it—but too many fellows go who have no appreciation of what a college education means, no special interest, no impelling motive, no desire for what college gives. When I entered college, it was a great event in our country community for a boy to break away from his environment and go off to a higher institution of learning; the neighbors all turned out to see me off. Now everybody goes; it is as common a thing for a boy to go to college as it is for him to take a summer vacation. I often ask the young fellows in our freshman class who come in to see me why they are in college, but I seldom get a very thoughtful or a very specific answer.

I asked Parker the other day. He is a boy of good brains and attractive physique. He has plenty of money, and every chance to do well, but his work is ragged and commonplace, he gets no pleasure out of books, he has no enthusiasm for study; he is quite as likely to fail as to pass when the test of final examinations comes.

"It wasn't because I wanted to come," was his reply. "My brother George finished here two years ago, and he wanted me to come. Father would have been disappointed if I had not done so, so what was I to do?"

He showed about as much animation and pleasure as a young fellow might do who was taking a dose of cod liver oil to please his grandmother.

Down the street a block or so was another boy to whom his college course is a source of constant joy. He has been an orphan for many years, he has no resources but those which come from the labor of his own hands. Ever since he was a small boy he had looked forward to being in college as one of the hoped-for but nearly impossible things. It was to him like a dream of fairy-land not likely to come true.

He worked his way through high school, he got a good job the following summer, he won a scholarship by examination, and then he began to feel that possibly his dream might be realized. He is in college now, and he finds it all a delight. He has no money and few pleasures, but he is full of enthusiasm, he laughs at the sacrifices he must make, he counts it a privilege to be able to pursue the subjects which he enjoys, and he knows very well why he came to college. His four years in college will be full of hard toil, but they will bring him constant and keen pleasure.

Too many boys go to college for the same reason that scores of fellows went into the army in 1917—it is the easiest thing to do; it is the thing which a large number of his friends are doing. To others it seems more attractive, perhaps, and more likely to result in a hilariously good time than going to work. There is a generally

accepted belief extant, also, that the man who goes to college is likely in some way to have an easier time than the fellow who does not do so. No one seems to appreciate the fact that the man who secures an education is also sure to fall heir to pretty heavy responsibilities.

Now why should a boy go to college? Not to any large extent because other fellows are doing so, though of course, custom is not a thing to be wholly ignored even in following educational practices; not so much as most people think to acquire information or to acquaint oneself with facts, though the accumulation of facts is a necessary detail in any system of education. More than for anything else, one should go to college for the symmetrical training of the mind, for the learning of self-control, for the disciplining of all the faculties, for the development of ideals.

I studied calculus and conic sections while I was in college; I pored over Anglo Saxon texts, and spent a considerable time in the chemical laboratory working out experiments and developing formulas. Most of these things I have forgotten, and few if any of them have I had any occasion to use in the routine business which has engaged my attention since I left college. I do not for this reason, however, in any way underestimate the permanent value of these subjects to me. They developed my brain, they caused me to think, they helped me to draw conclusions quickly and gave me a broader



and clearer outlook on life, and these powers have helped me every day of my life since, in every relation which I have borne to my fellow men. It is seldom that I have needed the specific information which I derived from these subjects, but all through the years I have depended upon the training which I thus received. It is this training and discipline which in my mind is the most valuable thing the college gives.

There are several sorts of men who should not go to college. The man who does not like to study, who finds no real pleasure in books, to whom the incidental things of college are the main consideration, has little business in college. I was talking to Rogers about his work this quarter. He is doing poorly, he can not get up in the morning, he finds class attendance irksome, and books and study bore him.

"If I can not make the ball team," he confessed to me, "there is little use of my staying in college. I'd a lot rather hold down the second sack than be elected to Phi Beta Kappa."

The facts are, however, that there's a slim chance of his attaining either distinction, for he will not be allowed to play ball at all if he doesn't carry his studies, and the likelihood of his making Phi Beta Kappa is about as remote as the establishment of an aëroplane route to Mars.

"You'd better apply for admission to one of the minor leagues," I advised him, "college is no place for you."

There are those who look upon college as a kind of

resting place between youth and manhood where one forms associations only, or absorbs a few facts or a little culture. They do not for a moment consider it a place where a young fellow should get down to business and work hard, but rather a place of leisure, or recreation, a place to dream and smoke, and sleep late in the morning, and talk nonsense to pretty girls while one is waiting for the real work of life to begin. It is this sort of man who yawns or turns up his nose when the subject of scholarship is introduced. He doesn't want to get high grades, not he. He is going to have to go to work quite soon enough, he declares, so why spoil the best years of one's life by digging.

Peters was that sort. He could prove by statistics gathered from all kinds of, to him at least, reliable sources that the commonplace man in his studies in college always develops later into a captain of finance or a world leader. He spent most of his time cultivating an effective shot at billiards or sitting in front of the fire smoking cigarettes and outlining to the other fellows who would listen to him the business and social conquests he expected to make when his college career should close. Unfortunately it closed somewhat sooner than he anticipated, for the faculty took another view of things than that held by Peters, and dropped him at the end of his sophomore year for poor scholarship. Peters is only one of the many illustrations I have known of the fact that there isn't much place in college for the loafer, or for the man who is trying only to pick up a little social experience or to acquire a little

intellectual polish without labor, before he gets into the real hustle of life.

There are a few boys undoubtedly who finish high school whose mental equipment is not quite adequate to the work of college, who are not natural students, who are better fitted for a trade than for a profession, and who would seldom have had their minds turned toward a college course were it not for the fact that so many of their mates were continuing their education beyond the high school. The number of these is not large, possibly, but it is sufficiently in evidence for a boy seriously to ask himself the question, "Am I mentally fitted to take up a college course?"

A good many boys can not afford to go to college. Sometimes home duties are arduous and can not be shirked, and though, if he followed his own personal desires, he would go on with his education, he realizes that he is under obligation to make the sacrifice. Sometimes the boy could get away, but there is no money available. The old theory was that any boy who had the desire for an education could always meet his college expenses in some way through manual labor. In fact there are many otherwise sensible people still who imagine that the self-supporting student in college is not only better off than other boys but is always near the head of the class. I have even known fathers who were quite able to pay the expenses of their sons in college who refused to do so because they exaggerated and idealized the intellectual advantages of

being poor. There is always to substantiate their theory, the story of Webster setting off to Dartmouth with his one pair of homespun trousers—later ruined by the rain—and a bag of potatoes for his subsistence. They do not suspect how much pain and suffering he would have been spared, how much better he might have done, had he been properly clothed and decently fed.

The real facts are that the self-supporting student in college misses a tremendous lot usually of what one should get from college, and in a good many instances fails entirely.

"I know absolutely nothing of what real college life is," a junior said to me only a few days ago. "I've earned my own living ever since I entered, and I've had my nose on the grindstone ever since I struck the campus. I sometimes wonder if it pays."

Such a student picks up an inadequate living, and he sometimes falls down on his final examinations. The reason is perfectly evident. The college course, if it is well carried, requires the most of a man's time. The self-supporting student is attempting two tasks either of which have ordinarily been considered sufficient to occupy a man's whole time and energy.

There is also extant another notion to the effect that in a college town it is easier to live on nothing or to pick up a good job than in any other place. Many a young fellow gravitates to a college town thinking he can get work there more readily than in any other place. Quite the contrary

is true. The average college town is the most expensive place to live one can find, and the fact that there are always hundreds of young fellows hunting for something to do to eke out an inadequate income, makes the opportunity for lucrative employment quite uncertain.

There are men, of course, in every college who earn all their living and who do well in their studies, but their number is small. Such men usually have some peculiar talent, such as the ability to play a musical instrument well, for instance, which enables them to earn a considerable amount of money in brief periods of time. I have spoken to a boy since I began to write this article who is earning his expenses through college, and he tells me that during the past week he has earned \$39.00 by playing the piano in an orchestra for four evenings. There are not many like him, however.

The man who works his way in college must have concentration and a quick, alert mind which will enable him to get his lessons in a short time. He must be resourceful, and let his head help his hands in earning his living. He must be physically strong and robust, for often he will need to get on for a time on less sleep than the average man, or his sleeping hours, at least, will be interrupted or irregular. He will have to be capable of sacrifice, for the man without money can have few of the social pleasures which fill so much of the leisure time of the college man. He can never afford to be an athlete, for participation in athletics will take up all his leisure time and leave

him no opportunity to earn his living. He should not be too sensitive or given to despondent spells, for his work will not always be pleasant or to his liking. He will often have to wait on his inferiors and say nothing when they treat him with condescension. I should never advise a boy to attempt to earn his living in college if he does not have to do so; often I think it is better to delay entrance to college until a respectable sum has been saved, and sometimes I am sure it is better not to go to college at all than to make the sacrifices and to do the worse than commonplace work which many self-supporting students find it impossible to avoid. I should rather enter college at twenty-two and do good work than to graduate at the same age and leave behind me a record that was not to my credit.

The boy who is always looking for practical things, who does not want to study anything that fails to reveal at once its practical application or its immediate availability as a money getter, is better off usually out of college than in. I see such men every day. They are never able to "see any use" in Latin, or philosophy, or literature; they are constantly objecting because certain courses in which they are registered are not what they thought they would be; they are not getting anything out of them, they say, quite likely because they are putting less into them themselves. Such men see very little in a college course, and for them in fact there probably is little, for though the college man is very likely to earn money more readily

because of his college training than other men, the fellow who goes to college solely because he thinks it will prove the readiest means to an easy and profitable job, might better stay at home.

The choice of a college is a subject which should be given some attention. The question is one often decided by sentiment, by prejudice, from practical considerations and from a thousand and one things sometimes trifling in themselves. The boy who goes to college in his home town is usually making a mistake. The only advantage such a young fellow derives is a financial one. It is generally cheaper to live at home than away from home, and, when the matter of finances is a vital one, it is better for a boy to go to college in his home town than not to go at all. I have never, except for financial reasons, advised any parents to move to a college town in order that they might look after and care for their sons while they were undergraduates in college, and I do not now recall the names of any sons who were strengthened by having their parents with them during the college course.

The boy living at home is usually less independent, less aggressive, possesses less initiative than the one who is thrown out upon his own resources to fight his own battles, to meet his own temptations, and to settle his own difficulties. The college practically always throws about him sufficient restraint to keep him from going on the rocks, and yet leaves him free enough to develop independence. If he is at home, his father, or especially his

mother, undertakes to decide for him in most critical emergencies and, though the judgment of the older person is likely to be more dependable than that of the younger, there is no training for the boy in depending upon his elders' judgment.

The boy from the west will often gain an advantage by going to an eastern institution for his education. Not that he will be better taught there, or live in a more refined or a rarer intellectual atmosphere, but because he will meet different sorts of people, he will need to adjust himself to quite different conditions from those to which he has been used, and he will get a broader outlook upon life. Such an experience will not be at all likely to make him dissatisfied with his own particular part of the country, but on the contrary will cause him to value it more highly. When I go to the mountains I always come back to the prairies with a sense of joy and satisfaction.

For this reason the New Englander or the Southerner would often be immeasurably benefited by taking his college training in the west. It would modify his provincialism, it would disabuse his mind of the idea that the most of the United States lies east of the Hudson river or south of Mason and Dixon's line, it would humanize him and teach him democracy, and, best of all, if he chooses his college wisely, it would give him as excellent a training as he could get anywhere else in the country, and often at considerably less expense.

Each college has its own traditions, its own atmosphere,



its own ideals and character. It is well worth while looking into these things in choosing a college. It is almost as necessary to avoid incompatibility of tastes in choosing a college as it is in choosing a wife. There is the conservative college and the liberal; the college in a country town and the country town about a college; there is the college in a city and the college near one. Whether one likes one sort of situation or another depends very much upon the individual himself.

The subject of the large institution versus the small one has been much discussed. I have been a student in a large institution where I knew nobody and where nobody had the slightest curiosity or desire to know me; I have been a teacher in a small institution which grew during my term of service to one of the largest universities in the country. Each type of college has its own advantages.

The main argument in support of the small college as opposed to the big university is about the same as that offered in defense of the country town as contrasted with the city. The small college is more democratic, perhaps. Students in it come more closely into touch with the older members of the faculty and with each other. The number of extra-curriculum activities does not vary materially from those in the larger institution, and, since the enrollment of students is small, the competition for student honors is very much less keen. While in a big institution there might easily be one thousand students in the senior or junior class, in the small college there would not be one

tenth as many. There is more chance, therefore, in the small college for the shy, unaggressive, commonplace man to gain prominence than in the larger one. There is, perhaps, more general comradeship, brotherly feeling, the life is more like home life, though the number of men whom one can know in a small college is not greater if so great as is possible in a big university outside of a great city.

The larger institution makes the stronger appeal to the man with initiative because it offers to him greater possibilities. To be manager or editor of a great college daily, to be captain of an athletic team whose victories are heralded from New York to San Francisco, to be president of a student organization in which there are five thousand votes to be considered, makes a strong appeal to the ambitious student. The opportunity, too, to touch elbows with men from all over the world, such men as one finds in a big university, is no small matter. The student in any large American university has a chance to know men from almost every civilized country in the world. The variety of interests, also, in the big institution is worth considering. I count it as one of the most valuable experiences of my college course, that though I was primarily interested in languages and literature while I was an undergraduate, yet I had daily associations with engineers and chemists, with prep-medics and mathematicians, and that, without consciously doing so, I acquired a considerable body of information and grew interested in a thousand incidental things through this association. One

is more alone in a big institution, one has more freedom, one must more often fight single-handed one's own battles. There is more chance of being lost in the crowd and more honor if one rises above it.

One would suppose, if he did not know otherwise, that a freshman in college barring the matter of a few months difference in age, is quite similar to a senior in high school, but whoever assumed such a premise would be far from the truth. One can always tell a freshman at college, just as, with few exceptions, one can tell an American college man when he sees him whether in Duluth or Singapore. The freshman may be as self-possessed as possible; he may dress as he chooses; he may ask no foolish questions or show no lack of familiarity with the college customs; but he is a marked man the moment he sets foot on the campus. Whether he comes from South Hadley, Massachusetts, or a country town in Kansas with one general store and a post office, it makes little difference, he can not conceal the fact that he is a newcomer beginning his experience in college. He is like the American in Paris, or Rotterdam, who thinks that if he does not speak no one will know him for a foreigner, but who is spotted a block away by every small boy, and fakir, on the street.

No one knows how he tells a freshman—it is probably a matter of intuition. But the freshman learns rapidly to adapt himself to the new situation; he picks up at once the ways of the campus; by Thanksgiving he seems like an old settler, and by the end of the year he is ready to

meet incoming freshmen with unerring recognition and condescension. Sometimes he adapts himself too incompletely to his new environment. It is as much a fault to cling rigidly to one's home manners and habits and dress as it is to throw these to the winds and adopt the extremes of college customs and fads. In the unimportant things of college life it is well for the freshman to keep his eyes open and to "do as the Romans do"; it is not wise for him, however, on his return home at Thanksgiving to attempt to reproduce and to establish the customs of Rome in his home community.

The differences between high school and college are marked. The methods of work and the ways of living are quite different from those in high school—quite different in fact, from what the boy thinks they are. It is not surprising that a high school boy's idea of college life is an erroneous one. What he knows of college he has most frequently gained from the exaggerated accounts of student escapades which he has seen in the newspapers, or from the stories which he has heard related by his big brother or a local athlete who has returned home from the scenes of his scholastic triumphs. Such tales are usually unhampered by facts, and concern themselves more with the unusual and the unimportant things of college than with its real work. If he has visited college at all it has more than likely been at the time of an important athletic contest, or of an interscholastic meet, when nobody works, or talks of work, and when the main thing under consider-

ation is the athletic victory, and perhaps the celebration which follows. As he saw college then, it was a collection of carefree young fellows with little to do but to enjoy themselves, and perhaps occasionally, if nothing more important prevented, to attend a few lectures. In point of fact college life is a strenuous life, where every man should be about his own business seriously and continuously. If one is to get on well in college, or in life for that matter, the sooner one recognizes this fact and adapts himself to the situation the better. Failure in college comes from a failure to recognize the fact that the aims of the college are different from those of the high school, that the amount of work required is greater, and that the methods of doing it must, also, be different. A man must adjust himself to these changed conditions if he would get on.

The high school boy has seldom worked independently. He knew that if his work were not done when it should be, his teacher would remind him of the fact. When he was in difficulty there was some one to get him out. Whatever he did, or thought, was somewhat under the supervision of someone older or more experienced than himself. He judged of his success, or his progress, by what these people said of him or to him. In college it is different. Everyone must look after himself; much of his training consists in his doing so. If he doesn't hustle, no one is likely at once to call his attention to the fact.

The problem of living has not materially concerned a freshman before he comes to college. He has lived at

home, and his comings and goings have been under the direction of the older members of the household. Most of his wants have been provided for without much thought or attention on his part. Mother has darned his stockings and picked out his neckties, and father has paid the bills. This matter of paying the bills is not to be ignored. The college man will get on more happily, he will more readily learn business methods, and he will live comfortably on a smaller amount if he has a stipulated monthly allowance. It ought to be sufficient to enable him to live comfortably, and it ought not to be so much as to necessitate wasting his time in order to spend it. The most discontented students about college and those who give college officers most concern are the students who have too little money to spend and those who have too much.

The habits of the boy going to college are as much the result of the conventions and customs of the community in which he has been brought up as of his own tendencies or inclinations. If he learned to dance it was because all the fellows did, if he went to church regularly, that was no necessary indication that he was religiously inclined; it was simply the custom. When he needed anything he asked for it without knowing much as to what it cost or where it came from. His comings and goings were somewhat supervised.

At college when his study program is decided upon, the disposal of his time is largely in his own hands. He may study one thing or another, or he need not study at all.

He may read in the library, or walk down town, or watch the team practicing on the athletic field; there is no one to call him to account. If he attends regularly upon classes, and shows a reasonable intelligence regarding his studies, he may employ his time as he pleases. He may choose his own companions, and act with absolute independence. There is a delightful freedom in all this which is sometimes deceiving. He may assume that since no one calls him to account today there will be no reckoning tomorrow, but in this he is mistaken, for he is in reality being looked after pretty carefully. His time is his own, but it is his own to use wisely, and if he fails in this regard, he will suffer in the final reckoning, and that reckoning comes all too soon.

On entering college every freshman will have some definite problems to face in a more personal way than they have ever before been presented to him. In most cases he has previously been familiar more or less closely with all the temptations which are to be found in college, but at home he has often been shielded from them—they have been more a name than a reality to him. Sooner or later every man must meet temptation face to face and say *yes* or *no* to its proposals. To many a young fellow the critical time comes at about the age when he goes to college. For this the college is in no way responsible, though many conscientious men have tried to hang the blame there.

I should not feel that I was quite doing my duty if I did

not say a word about the temptations peculiar to young men at the age when they enter college, and which in college, perhaps, are touched up with peculiar allurements and attractions. It is true that a large majority of young men are little affected by these temptations and still fewer are permanently injured by them, but those who fail in college do so usually not from inability to do the work, but because they are led away by these other things.

May I speak in a more personal and direct way to the boy entering college? First of all there is the habit of loafing. Before you leave the train which is carrying you to your college town, sometimes unfortunately even before you are out of high school, you will have made engagements for days and weeks in advance which will often seriously interfere with the real work of college. There is the fraternity rushing, and the open grate fire, and the pipe, and the vaudeville show, and the new-found friend, and the moon smiling down and inviting you out to stroll, and all these pleading in the strongest terms for self-indulgence, and self-gratification. There are a thousand other new and fascinating things which you may call by any name you please, but which after all are only other names for loafing. If you get into the habit of dawdling away your time, you can conjure up a hundred apparently good excuses for not studying, and for not going to class.

Perhaps one of the main reasons why it all seems so attractive and so safe is because the days are so long,



and the time of final reckoning so far ahead and youth is so optimistic. I seldom call a man for procrastination and neglect of duty who does not tell me that it had been his serious intention to see me that day even if I had not called him, and I presume he is often telling the truth. I seldom talk to a loafer who has not promised himself, even before I urge him to get down to serious work, that he will stop loafing at once. The loafer has a sensitive conscience.

"I was coming in to see you today even if you had not called me," Walsh said to me this morning. "I know what you're going to say; I'm a loafer."

Loafing is a habit easily learned and hard to break, and it ruins more college careers at the very outset than does any other vice.

Then you should have a regular time for going to work each evening. You should not be turned from the habit by alluring invitations to get into card games, or to stand around the piano and develop your taste for poor music, or to waste the evening in attendance upon a low-class vaudeville show, or a racy moving picture performance, or even to sit in front of the fire and talk about politics or the girls with your room-mate. When the time comes for study, you should go to it as if you liked it, and do this six days in the week and three or four hours a day. If you do this for a month or two there will be little likelihood of your developing into a chronic loafer. I have said all of this knowing that every healthy young fellow

will want pleasure and relaxation and knowing also that he ought to have it. But the day furnishes time enough for class work and study and recreation and sleep if the twenty-four hours are intelligently utilized, and there is plenty of healthful recreation for the body and the mind if one will look for it.

The temptation to waste time in gambling is an ever-present danger. There is a fascination in risking your judgment in a bet with another fellow or in a game of chance, which many a young man finds it hard to resist. It is so easy to argue that one must have some recreation, and, that if the time spent in playing games of chance is not intemperate or in excess of what one can afford, there should be no objection to the practice on the part of any sensible people. As to the money lost or won (for some one usually wins) it is often a negligible quantity, and in most cases not more perhaps than you might spend on a first class show or entertainment of any sort.

"What is the harm to me?" a young man asked me not long ago. "I can afford the time and the money it costs me. Why should I not play poker for money?"

I should answer that it is a dangerous habit, because it almost invariably leads to excesses. The gambler learns to take risks which he can not afford, to waste time that should be given to something else, to bet and to lose money which was not intended for this purpose, and he develops at once a reputation for unreliability. No business man, even if he himself gambles, cares to em-

ploy a young fellow who has, or has had the habit, simply because he knows the dangers which surround it. I have known few men who began the habit in college who found it easy to break, and I have known none who, even though he played for small stakes and won or lost very little money, was not injured by it. If the habit is nothing more, it is a time waster and leads into associations which it were usually better not to have formed.

As to drinking, perhaps, now that prohibition has become nation wide, we shall have little or none of that in college. Many fellows say to me that they learned to drink at home with their fathers and mothers about the dinner table. If it must be done, I know of no better place to do it. The drinking habit as I have seen it practiced in a college community has never been a help nor an advantage to any student, and it has usually been a distinct injury. The only excuse for it is that it is supposed to encourage sociability and to promote good fellowship; but the sort of good fellowship which it encourages is not of very high order. The men and women whom you are likely to meet at drinking places are not the kind that a college student will be benefited by knowing, and the time spent in their society is not usually spent in such a way as to make him a better citizen. It is a fact, also, that practically all the young fellows I have known who speak of the harmlessness of "taking a glass of beer occasionally" at one time or another take more than they can carry and are the worse for it. The safest plan if you

are going to college with the idea of doing honest, satisfactory work is to leave the drinking of intoxicating liquors to those who have no real interest in the development of their moral and intellectual powers, for the drinking habit will invariably play havoc with your college work, not to speak of your morals.

Smoking, too, although it can scarcely be called an immoral habit, has upon nervous and growing young fellows a bad effect. It is likely to develop restlessness and indigestion with the result that your power of concentration is weakened, your brain dulled, and the likelihood of your doing good work very much lessened. The habit of using tobacco is in these days so common among young men that it seems almost a waste of time to speak against it. I have, however, seen too many nervous systems weakened by its use, and the work of too many students injured irreparably, not to utter a word of warning against it. Though the number of young fellows in college who smoke is regrettably large, you will gain nothing either in prestige or dignity by doing so. The ability to hold a pipe between the teeth or to puff at a cigarette does not make you more of a man even in a college community, and the fact that you do not smoke brings you into no discredit. No one need to say that he was forced into smoking in college or that he was made uncomfortable by refusing to do so. If you find, therefore, that smoking is injuring your temper and your pocketbook and your studies, give

it up; you will be quite as popular as you were before, and maybe more of a man.

If you have come from a healthy home where you have been taught by a good mother to live a clean life, and to respect all women, you may be shocked at first by some of the views which are presented to you, and later you may even come to the point of asking yourself if you have not been a trifle prudish in your ideas, and if the other fellow may not be right in his views. There will be those who will try to teach you that it is not only not necessary for you to lead a chaste clean life, but that it is positively not a healthy thing for you to do so. They will teach you that if you desire to gain your highest physical development you must gratify your physical desires, and such men are only too willing to show you how this may be done. The statements of thousands of reputable physicians are to the effect that no young man suffers physically by living a life of chastity, but on the contrary he gains in strength and endurance by such a course. The young man who allows himself to be led into the associations of lewd women either through curiosity or the desire to know something of "real life" is running the gravest sort of danger. Most men who submit themselves to such temptations fall a prey to them, and the result in most cases is a weakened will, a lowered moral tone, disease, a wrecked body, and eternal regret.

Only a few months ago I stood beside the operating

table where a young college student was about to submit to a critical operation to alleviate a disease which he had contracted from a prostitute. He was thinking, I know, of the pain which he must endure and of the danger to his life, and looking up into my face he said, having in mind the many fellows to whom I talk every year, "Tell them they always have to pay for it; they always have to pay for it." Through many years of observation on thousands of students I have come to know that the boy's words are true. The clean, continent life is the only safe one, and those young men who think other wise and who gratify their physical passions "pay for it" ultimately in ruined health, and ruined characters, and ruined studies. The student with a clean mind and clean morals has the best chance of winning high scholastic standing. One other thing that you should well keep in mind—some day you are going to have a home of your own; and to take to it the girl whom you have chosen to be your wife. If at that time you can come to her with a body free from the effects of disease and a past life clean and wholesome, you may count the sacrifices of self-control as nothing compared with the satisfaction you will then feel.

In going to college most young fellows find themselves away from the restraints of home for the first time. Fathers and mothers often feel that this sending the boy away from home and putting him in the way of temptation and upon his own responsibility is a danger which they

can not risk. Sometime or other, if one is to learn to swim, he must be thrown into the water, and allowed to make the struggle alone. It is not likely to work any damage if some one is sufficiently interested to stand by and watch the struggle, and if drowning is imminent, which is seldom the case, to extend the helping hand. Usually the swimmer learns because he has to, as the muskrat was said to learn to climb a tree. Having been given preliminary training he must be allowed to work out his own methods; he may go under a few times and take in a little water, but he learns in the end to swim.

It is equally true of the college man. He must learn independence and self-reliance, and self-direction in the same way that young people learn to swim. One of the greatest sources of satisfaction to a college officer is to see how few suffer real disaster in the learning, and, when these unfortunate results do come, the trouble is quite as often at home as elsewhere, and would very likely have occurred no matter where the young man had been.

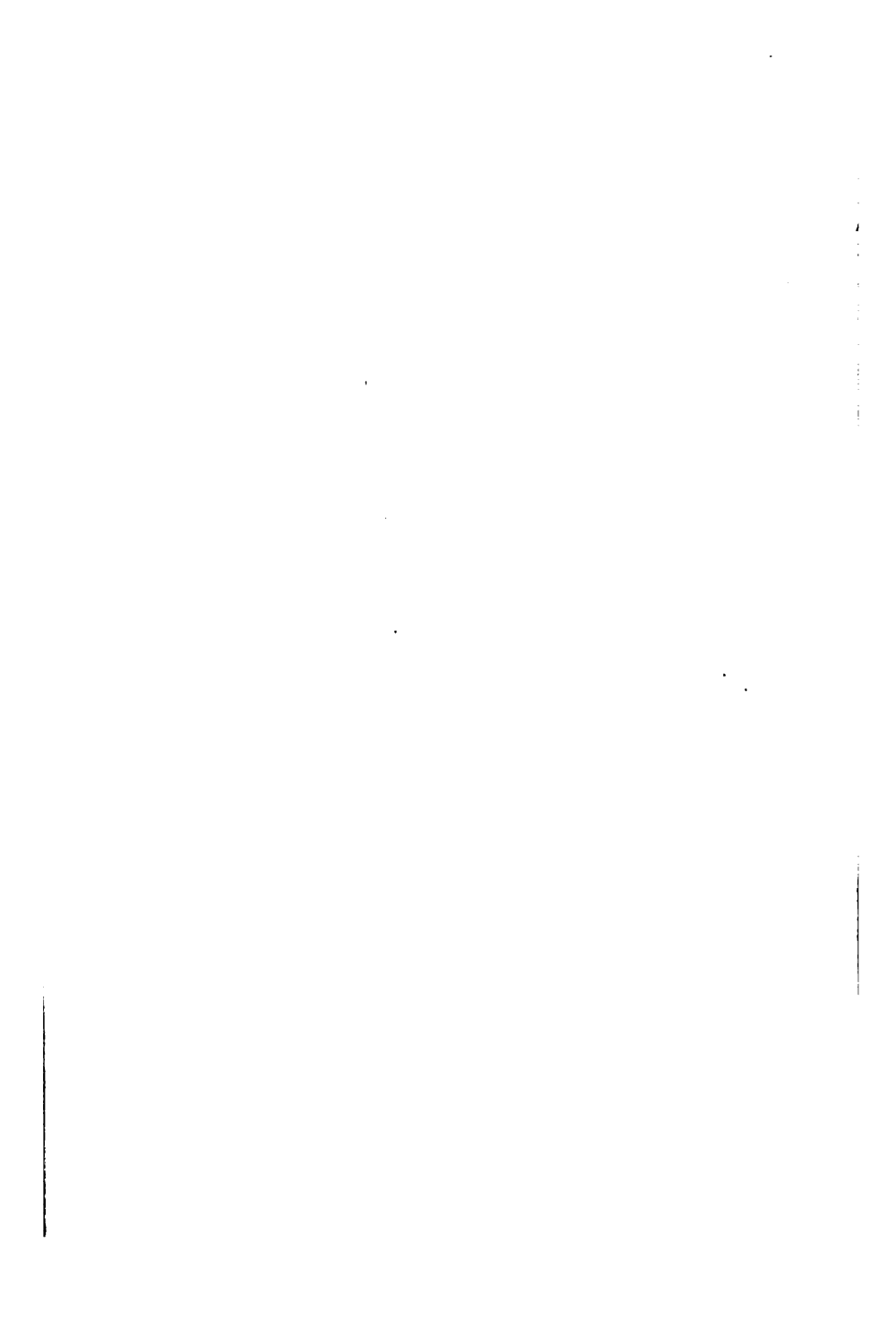
The matter of your associates is a serious one. The majority of the people with whom you are most intimately thrown you may very likely have never seen before; of their habits and their ancestors you can at first know but little. You should use caution, if you are to choose wisely. You will be better off and safer in the end if you go slowly and look about you before you plunge into too fast friendships, either literally or figuratively. Your friends are most likely to be your making or your

undoing. You have your opportunity to choose them consciously, and you should do this with a full knowledge of what your choice may mean. Good friends will lead you in the right direction, will help you to cultivate healthy, right habits, and will aid you in getting out of your college course the best there is in it. Ill chosen friends may easily defeat all the right purposes for which you have come to college. Now, as always, a man is judged by the company he keeps.

All these problems are difficult, but they are possible of solution, and they are only a part of the training in the discipline of the mind and of the body which forms the major part of education.



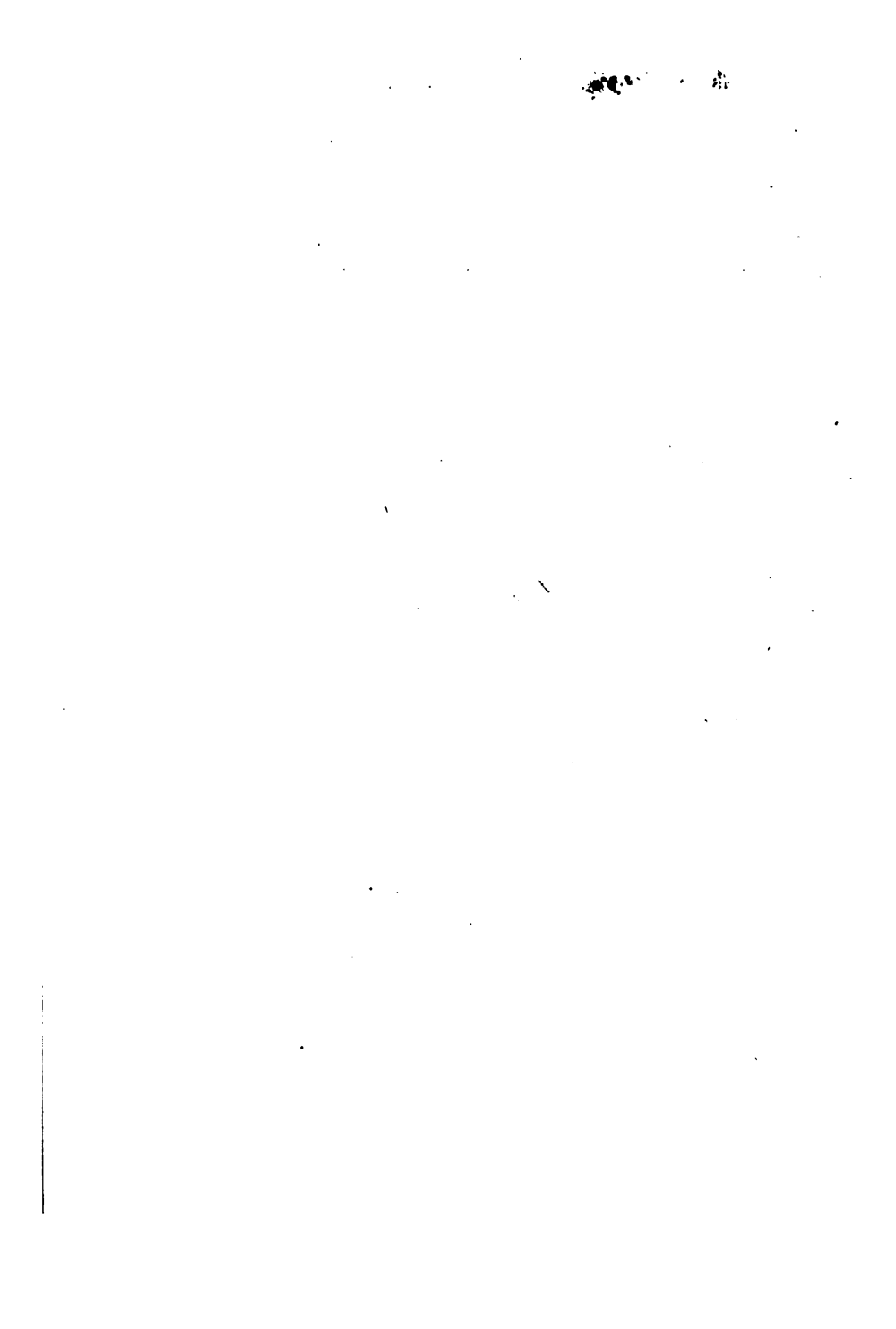












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